

PART II: METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES OF KRIYA YOGA

CHAPTER 6

THE BASIC TECHNIQUES OF KRIYA YOGA

Disclaimer of Responsibility

The techniques described herein are exposed for study purposes only and should serve as a comparison with the works of other researchers. The author hopes this work will inspire intelligent feedback. Any remarks, criticism, corrections, and/or additions are welcome. Before you begin posing all kinds of questions to yourself, read through Part II and Part III of this book so you have a thorough understanding of the matter. You'll find that as you go through it many questions will be answered.

I wish to make clear that this book is not a Kriya Yoga manual! I may write one and face the problem of dividing it into different lessons and giving all the necessary instructions for each level. However, certain delicate techniques e.g. Maha Mudra, Kriya Pranayama, Thokar, and Yoni Mudra cannot be learned from a manual and require the help of an expert to check their execution. Each person is different so it is not possible to predict what effects an intensive practice might have on a particular individual.

The author disclaims any responsibility in case of negative results, especially if the techniques are practiced without first having their execution checked by an expert. Those who intend to carry on this practice should do so with a due sense of sacredness and awareness of the wealth it can bring to their life. Although you should have the right and the duty to control your own destiny, securing expert counsel or guidance is indispensable.

When you go to an expert, please advise them of physical problems, such as high blood pressure, lung problems, or signs of hyperventilation If you have a particular physical problem or handicap, an expert can lead you through a very mild form of Kriya Pranayama and the corresponding Mudras – and if necessary, may recommend that you practice them only mentally.

Localization of the Chakras

The *Chakras* are subtle astral (ethereal) organs inside the spinal cord; ideal steps on a mystic ladder guiding one safely to the deepest ecstatic experience. Many falsely believe they can apply what they find in *Yoga* books to *Kriya*. Unfortunately, such books are usually filled with useless, misguided representations. While wasting time in visualizing it all, a *kriyaban* runs the risk of losing the real meaning of the *Kriya* techniques or part of their richness.

Kriya is a natural process leading to beneficial results and it should not be distorted by the power of "creative" visualization, especially if it goes against our body physiology. When certain particular conditions are established – mental silence, relaxation, an intense desire of the soul – the Spiritual Reality manifests in a captivating way and absorbs all one's attention. Then, subtle movements of energy in the body – or a particular centering of the energy in some parts of the body – reveal the essence of the *Chakras*.

Those who practice *Kriya Yoga* (*kriyabans*) begin with the basic technique of *Kriya Pranayama* and visualize the spine as a hollow tube extending from the base of the spine to the brain. With further practice, they try to locate/feel the seven *Chakras*.

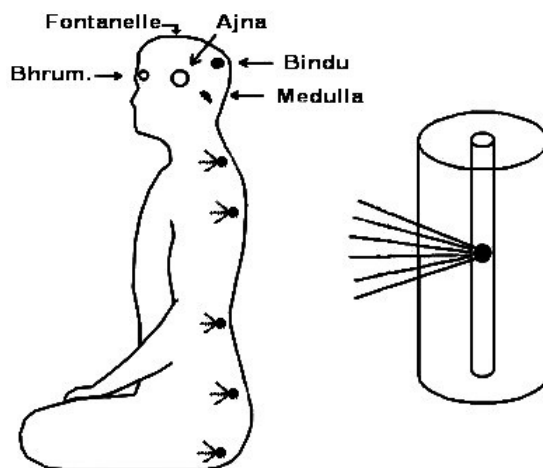


Figure 1. The perception of the Chakras

First Five Chakras

The first *Chakra*, ***Muladhara***, is at the base of the spinal column just above the coccygeal (tailbone) region. The second *Chakra*, ***Swadhisthana***, is in the sacral region, above and behind the genitals or 2-5cm below the navel /bellybutton i.e. halfway between *Muladhara* and *Manipura*. The third *Chakra*, ***Manipura***, is in the lumbar region, at the same level as the navel/ bellybutton. The fourth *Chakra*, ***Anahata***, is in the dorsal region; its location can be felt by bringing the shoulder blades closer and concentrating on the tense muscles in the area between them or

just below them. The fifth *Chakra*, **Vishuddha**, is at the cervical /collarbone /thyroid level where the neck joins the shoulders. Its location can be detected by swaying the head from side to side, keeping the upper chest immobile, and concentrating on the point where you perceive a "cracking" sound.

The physical localization of the *Chakras* is improved through visualization. The simplest visualization that fosters the dynamics of *Kriya Pranayama* is having the awareness travel up the spine and perceiving the *Chakras* as tiny "twinkling lights" illuminating a "hollow tube," which is visualized in place of the spinal cord. When the awareness is brought down, the *Chakras* are internally perceived as organs distributing energy (coming from infinity above) into the body. Luminous rays depart from their locations, enlivening/energizing that part of the body which is in front of them. To take the trouble to abide by such elementary visualization, avoiding those suggested by *New Age* or *tantric* books is the best guarantee of having a beneficial practice.

Chakras are not a physical reality; their true location is in the astral dimension, which is only visible to clairvoyants or when *Kriya Pranayama* takes, so to say, the "inward route" to the inner sounds emanating from each *Chakra*. If the mind is sufficiently calm e.g. during a long, deep session of *Kriya Pranayama*, you will be able to listen to those astral sounds and locate each *Chakra* astrally.

There are different levels of development of this ability: *Kechari Mudra* brings about a great internalization process which fosters the experience especially when the "wind" of the breath subsides.

Astrally locating *Chakras* is connected to the ability of traveling within the spinal tunnel, which in turn is the basis for realizing that the five *Chakras* are five different states of consciousness.

In *Kriya* tradition, the *Chakras* are related to the five *Tattwas*: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Offering each *Tattwa* individually to the light of the "spiritual eye" gathering and intensifying in the region between the eyebrows is the highest action ever conceived to dispel the last shell of illusion. However, I would discourage *kriyabans* from being maniacally precise about the location of the *Chakras*: the practice of the different levels of *Kriya Yoga* will refine their perception.

Ajna (Medulla oblongata, Bhru madhya, Kutastha)

The sixth *Chakra*, **Ajna**, according to tradition, is in the central part of the head. Some identify it with the **hypophysis (pituitary)** gland, others with the **pineal** gland, and others with the **third ventricle of the brain**. It is preferable to abide by the following two-step procedure.

1. First detect the seat of the **Medulla oblongata** (on top of the spinal cord). Raise your chin tensing the muscles of the neck at the base of the occipital bone; concentrate on the small hollow under the back of the head and then ideally move inside a couple of centimeters; while contracting the neck muscles, swing your head sideways (a few centimeters left and right); relax the muscles of the neck and concentrate on the *Medulla oblongata* for one minute: you will

notice that any restlessness disappears. Tradition recommends visualizing the *Medulla oblongata* as shaped like the back of a small turtle.

2. Remaining centered in the *Medulla oblongata*, converge your inner gaze on **Bhrumadhya**, the point between the eyebrows, and observe the internal light in that region. Your perception may be vague but if you continue looking internally and remain satisfied with whatever luminous perception comes, the light will intensify. Straight back and about 8 centimeters from where the light appears is the sixth *Chakra*, **Ajna**. Meditating with your awareness focused on it will prepare you for the experience of **Kutastha** (aka **third eye** or **spiritual eye**): a luminous point in the middle of an infinite spherical radiance. In this region, one day, you will experience the radiance of a million suns having the coolness of a million moons.

Ajna Chakra is the royal entrance to the Divine Consciousness, which is immanent in our physical universe. You will experience the entire universe as your own body. This experience is also called *Kutastha Chaitanya*, *Christ consciousness*, or *Krishna consciousness*.

Note: the term *Kutastha* is often utilized at the place of *Bhrumadhya*.

Sahasrara (Bindu, Fontanelle)

According to tradition, the seventh *Chakra*, **Sahasrara**, is at the top of the head. It is visualized as a horizontal disk about 12 centimeters in diameter, lying immediately beneath the upper part of the cranium. In part 3 of *Kriya Pranayama*, when we raise our awareness from the sixth to the seventh *Chakra*, this visualization is enough to get ecstatic absorption.

Bindu is located in the occipital region, where the hairline twists in a kind of vortex (where Hindus with shaved heads wear a lock of hair). During the first part of *Kriya Pranayama*, the consciousness touches *Bindu* briefly at the end of each inhalation. In the higher phases of *Kriya Pranayama*, when our awareness finds tranquility in *Bindu*, we become aware of the **bregma** (*anterior fontanelle* during infancy) located on the top of the skull at the junction of the coronal and sagittal sutures, where the frontal bone and parietal bones meet. It is recommended not to override the previous stage of localization of the sixth *Chakra* (*Ajna*). Do not practice concentration on the *bregma* on your own initiative except when explicitly required to by your teacher.

There is always room for improvement in *Kriya Yoga*. The most reliable *Kriya* schools are careful about using methods whose effects are difficult to sustain and therefore teach a gradual approach to concentration on *Sahasrara*. They counsel placing the awareness in *Bindu* and from there becoming aware of *bregma*.

Position for Meditation

One should sit facing east. According to Patanjali, the *yogi's* posture (*Asana*) must be steady and pleasant.

Half-lotus: Most *kriyabans* are relaxed in this sitting position, which has been used since time immemorial for meditation, because it's comfortable and easily managed. The key is to maintain an erect spine by sitting on the edge of a thick cushion so the buttocks are slightly raised. Sit cross-legged with the knees resting on the floor. Bring the left foot toward the body so its sole is resting against the inside of the right thigh. Draw the heel of the left foot in toward the groin as much as possible. The right leg is bent at the knee and the right foot is comfortably placed over the left thigh or calf or both. Let the right knee drop as far as possible toward the floor. The shoulders are in a natural position. The head, neck, chest, and spine are in a straight line as if they were linked. When the legs get tired, reverse them to prolong the position.

The best hand position is with fingers interlocked as in the well-known photo of Lahiri Mahasaya. This balances the energy from the right hand to the left and vice versa. The hand position for meditation and for *Pranayama* is the same because you move from *Pranayama* to meditation without interruption. Usually you don't even realize it.

For certain health or physical conditions, it may be beneficial to practice the half lotus on an armless chair provided it is large enough. In this way, one leg at a time can be lowered and the knee joint relaxed!

Siddhasana: (Perfect Pose) is of medium difficulty. The sole of the left foot is placed against the right thigh while the heel presses on the perineum. The right heel is against the pubic bone. This leg position combined with *Kechari Mudra* closes the pranic circuit and makes *Kriya Pranayama* easy and beneficial. It is said the position helps one to become aware of the movement of *Prana*.

Padmasana: (lotus position) a difficult, uncomfortable position; the right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh with the soles of the feet turned up. It is explained that when this *Asana* is combined with *Kechari* and *Shambhavi Mudra*, it results in an energetic condition that produces the experience of the internal light coming from each *Chakra*. It helps keep the body from bending or falling over as it tends to do when deep *Pratyahara* is practiced. *Padmasana* is uncomfortable for a beginner because the knees and the ankles become extremely painful. I would not advise anyone to perform this difficult posture; some *yogis* have had to have knee cartilage removed after years of forcing themselves into the *Padmasana*.

Eight Basic Techniques of Kriya Yoga

The following techniques are usually given during the first initiation into *Kriya Yoga*: *Talabya Kriya*, *Om Japa* (in the *Chakras*), *Kriya Pranayama* (often denoted simply by *Pranayama*) in three parts, *Navi Kriya*, *Maha Mudra*, *Kriya Pranayama with short breath*, *mental Pranayama* and *Yoni Mudra*.¹

1. Talabya Kriya

Start with the tongue in a relaxed position with the tip lightly touching the back of the upper teeth. Press the body of the tongue against the upper palate to create a suction cup effect. Many practice *Talabya Kriya* incorrectly by instinctively turning their tongue backwards (or keeping it vertical) but this cancels the whole effect. It is important to have the tongue tip touching the back of the upper teeth before pressing its body against the upper palate.

While pressing the tongue against the upper palate (roof of the mouth), drop/lower the bottom jaw until you clearly feel the stretch in the *lingual frenulum* (the small fold of tissue under the tongue that attaches it to the base of the mouth) (Figure 2).

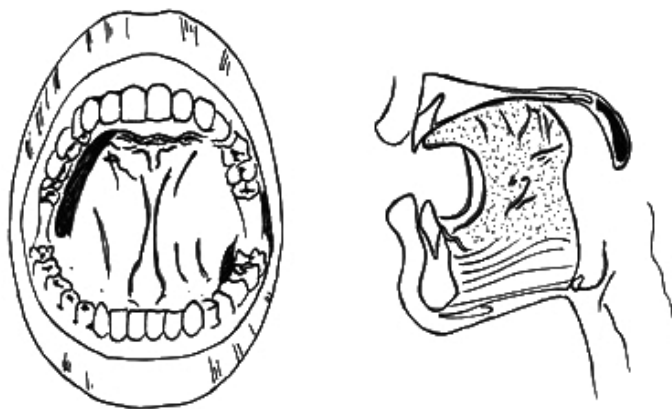


Figure 2. Talabya Kriya: pressing the body of the tongue against the upper palate to create a suction cup effect

Release the tongue with a clicking sound then stick it out of the mouth and point it toward the chin. At the beginning, do not exceed 10 repetitions a day to avoid straining the *frenulum*. Eventually, you want to do 50 repetitions in about 2 minutes (110-120 seconds.)

After some months of practicing *Talabya Kriya* regularly, it should be

¹ To check if refinements have been added to the description of the techniques, visit www.kriyayogainfo.net at least once a year.

possible to insert the tongue into the nasal pharynx cavity (*Kechari Mudra*). *Kechari Mudra* (Figure 3) is described in detail in the next chapter.

Even after mastering *Kechari Mudra*, *Talabya Kriya* should continue to be practiced because it creates a perceivable relaxing effect on the thinking process. It is not known why stretching the frenulum reduces thought production, however, anyone practicing the technique can readily verify this.

Remark

In *Hatha Yoga* books there are different suggestions for lengthening the *frenulum*. One which is well known one is wrapping a piece of cloth around the tongue and, with the help of the hands, gently pulling (relaxing and repeating different times) the cloth both horizontally and also up, toward the tip of the nose. Lahiri Mahasaya was absolutely against cutting the *frenulum* to obtain faster and easier results.

2. Om Japa in the Chakras

Starting with the first *Chakra Muladhara*, chant the *Mantra* "Om" while concentrating on it; then do the same with the second *Chakra* and so on up to the fifth *Chakra (Vishuddha)* and then with *Bindu*. During the ascent, do your best to intuitively touch the inner core of each *Chakra*. The descent begins by chanting "Om" in the *Medulla oblongata*, then in the cervical *Chakra* and so on, all the way down to the first *Chakra*. During this descent of awareness, try to perceive the subtle radiation of each *Chakra*.

One ascent (*Chakras* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, *Bindu*) and one descent (*Medulla oblongata*, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1) represent one cycle that lasts 25-30 seconds. Do 6 to 12 cycles. Do not pay any attention to the breath other than to breathe naturally. The *Om Mantra* may be chanted aloud during the first three cycles. In the remaining cycles chant *Om* mentally.

The correct pronunciation for "Om" is like the "ong" in "song" but drawn out. It must not be pronounced like the "om" in Tom e.g. "ahm." In this technique, "Om" is a pure prolonged vowel sound pronounced like the alphabet letter "o." The "m" is silent and the "o" sound is lengthened. At the end, the mouth is not completely closed – thus creating the nasal sound "ng". When pronouncing Indian *Mantras*, like *Om namo bhagavate ...* or *Om namah Shivaya ...*, the consonant "m" in "Om" is heard. Some say the correct note of *Om* is B (Si) before Middle C (Do).

This exercise, performed with concentration, makes the best form of *Kriya Pranayama* happen during your meditation routine. If one cycle lasts 25-30 seconds, then each *Om* chant last about 2 seconds, which is very good. Sure enough, a longer cycle e.g. 44 seconds, as counseled by Lahiri Mahasaya, would be very appropriate, providing one's concentration is always constant. [The ideal practice is when a cycle lasts 60 seconds. But this creates boredom and many *kriyabans* would tend to skip this introductory procedure.]

3. Kriya Pranayama (Spinal Breathing)

Kriya Pranayama is the most important technique. It acts directly on the energy (*Prana*) present in the body. *Kriya Acharyas* use different didactic strategies to

introduce it. I will explain its key details, however it is not easy to show how they are integrated into a harmonious whole.

First Part: long breath with strong sounds in the throat

Kechari Mudra is applied. For those who can't do it, touch with the tip of the tongue the middle of the upper palate at the point where the hard palate becomes soft. Keep mouth and eyes closed. The eyes are relaxed and focused on the region between the eyebrows but the awareness is in the *Medulla oblongata*.

One *Kriya* breath entails:

1. A deep inhalation through the nose that produces an unvoiced sound (like *Ujjayi Pranayama*) in the throat, which acts like a hydraulic pump to raise the energy (*Prana*) from the base of the spinal column up to the *Medulla oblongata* and then up to *Bindu* (occipital region).

2. A short pause of 2-3 seconds where the movement of the air is suspended. This helps suspend the activity of the mind as well: a state of stability appears.

3. An unhurried exhalation through the nose of the same length as the inhalation that accompanies the movement of the energy back to the base of the spinal column. During the last part of the exhalation, there is a clear perception of the navel moving in toward the spine. By refining this experience and the awareness of the navel moving inward, one feels the action of the diaphragm muscles and becomes conscious of increasing heat in the navel. This heat seems to rise from the lower part of the abdomen.

4. Another 2-3-second pause. This pause is intimately lived as a moment of comfortable peace. The dynamic mind becomes static and is appeased.

Reference literature says perfect *Kriya Pranayama* is 80 breaths per hour – about 45 seconds per breath. *Kriyabans* can only reach this rhythm during long sessions. Whereas an advanced *kriyaban* would complete 12 breaths in around 9 minutes, beginners should set a rhythm of 18-20 seconds per *Kriya* breath (including the pauses) and complete 12 breaths in a natural and unhurried way in about 4 -5 minutes.

Remarks

The path taken by the energy gradually reveals itself during practice. No difficult visualization is required. You are centered in the *Medulla oblongata* and your inner gaze is toward the point between the eyebrows. The awareness rises from the *Muladhara* along the spinal column toward the second *Chakra*, the third, the fourth, the fifth *Chakra*, the *Medulla oblongata* and, if possible, up to *Bindu*. During the pause, the radiance of *Kutastha* appears as a blurred light or glow permeating the frontal part of the brain. You can sometimes perceive a slight sensation of crepuscular light permeating the upper part of the head. In this first

part of *Kriya Pranayama*, the energy cannot reach either the region between the eyebrows nor *Sahasrara*; this will happen in the third part.

Breathing during *Kriya Pranayama* is not free breathing but restricted breathing that creates a clearly heard sound in the throat. This sound while inhaling is like a quiet *schhhh* /ʃ/. The sound is similar to the amplified background noise of a loudspeaker; there is only a slight hiss during exhalation.

There are many poor Internet video clips of *Ujjayi Pranayama* with *yogis* who make a horrible sound because they are using /vibrating their vocal chords: this is not correct in *Kriya Pranayama*. Fortunately, there are also good explanations of *Ujjayi Pranayama* that I signal in my web site.

To make certain the sound is correct, concentrate only on increasing the friction of the air flowing through your throat. A muffled sound will originate. Increase its frequency. If the surroundings are perfectly still, a person could hear it within a 4-5 meter radius – by no means outside it. However, do not expect sound perfection yet. When *Kechari Mudra* is eventually done correctly, the exhaling sound will be flute-like: *Sheee Sheee* /ʃi:/. The meaning and the implications of this sound are discussed in the next chapter.

The inhaling air is felt cool whereas the exhaling air is felt moderately warm; as a consequence the energy is felt cool when rising and slightly warm when descending.

During inhalation, the abdomen expands and during exhalation the abdomen is drawn in. The breathing is mainly abdominal; during inhalation, the upper part of the lungs is filled two thirds full. Do NOT raise the rib cage or the shoulders.

As for the value of the pauses, the more you became aware of these states of stability, the deeper your practice becomes.

During the first breaths of *Kriya Pranayama*, do not chant *Om* or another *Mantra* in any *Chakra*: do not disturb the employment of a great mental intensity to obtain the perception of the movement of the energy.

Second Part: placing Om in each Chakra

Introduction

The astral sounds of the *Chakras* can be perceived during the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*. They capture a *kriyaban's* awareness and lead it to greater depths without any danger of it getting lost. They are not physical sounds; they have nothing to do with the typical *Kriya Pranayama* sound produced by the air that passes down the back of the throat into the trachea and vice versa. These sounds appear in different forms: bumblebee, flute, harp, drum, hum like an electrical transformer, bell....

The event of perceiving them is not produced by the intensity of a unique moment of deep concentration but by the accumulation of effort manifested during daily sessions of *Kriya* (effort is the meticulous attention to any internal sound, no matter how faint). Those who are not able to hear any internal sound should not conclude something is wrong. Maybe they have done an enormous effort whose fruits will be enjoyed during the next day's practice or some day in the future. A sign one is heading in the right direction is a sense of mild pressure, like a sensation of liquid peace above or around the head often accompanied by a certain humming. It serves no purpose wondering if this is the real *Om* because it is probably just a signal that the real experience is approaching. Patience and constancy are of prime importance. One day, one will awaken to the realization that one is actually hearing a sound of "running water".

Om is similar to the sound of running water or to waves breaking over cliffs. Lahiri Mahasaya described it as a sound "produced by a lot of people continually striking the disk of a bell and as continuous as oil flowing out of a container".

In the second part of *Kriya Pranayama*, the awareness expands into the entire occipital region up to *Bindu*. During inhalation, *Om* is mentally chanted (or more accurately "mentally placed") in each of the first five *Chakras*. During the pause, *Om* is chanted in the *Medulla oblongata*, in the point between the eyebrows, and again in the *Medulla oblongata*. During exhalation, *Om* is mentally placed in each *Chakra* as gently "touching" it from the back. Therefore, while coming down to *Muladhara*, the energy is visualized flowing down along the back of the spinal column.

Repeat the procedure at least 24 times. Let us emphasize again: the attention is focused on the subtle sounds that come from the *Chakras* rather than on the sound of the breath. What is essential is a continuous will to listen internally. Each chanting of the syllable *Om* should be accompanied by an unswerving will to track down the echo of this vibration. Awareness of astral sounds must happen, sooner or later. Your listening skills will improve and you will become more sensitive.

Third Part: focusing all the awareness into the upper part of the head

This third part of *Kriya Pranayama* can be approached only when you have reached a daily number of 48 *Kriya* breaths and possibly when *Kechari Mudra* is achieved. Always begin your practice with the first part of *Kriya Pranayama* for at least 12 breaths, and then skip to the second part of *Kriya Pranayama* until you have completed 48 *Kriya* breaths altogether. We are going to learn a higher form of *Shambhavi Mudra*.

Shambhavi Mudra is usually defined as the act of concentrating on the space between the eyebrows, bringing the two eyebrows toward the center with a slight wrinkling of the forehead. Our higher form of *Shambhavi Mudra* involves closed or half-closed eyelids, the eyes looking upward as much as possible as if looking

at the ceiling but without any head movement. The light tension perceived in the muscles of the eyeballs gradually disappears and the position can be maintained rather easily. A bystander would observe the sclera (white of the eye) under the iris because very often the inferior eyelids relax. (Lahiri Mahasaya in his well-known portrait is showing this *Mudra*.) Through this *Mudra*, all one's *Prana* collects at the top of the head.

During this *Mudra* you practice the instructions for the second part of *Kriya Pranayama* (chanting of *Om* in the prescribed places) save the center of awareness which is now in the upper part of the head. Continue until you have completed the prearranged number of repetitions (60, 72 or more.)

This practice is a real jewel and represents the quintessence of beauty; while experiencing it, time goes by without much notice and what could seem to be an exhausting task e.g. 108 or 144 repetitions – turns out to be as easy as a moment of rest. You will notice the breath is rather slow. You will enjoy the beautiful feeling of fresh air that seems to come up through the spine and pierce each *Chakra*, and of the warm exhaled air permeating each zone of the body from top to bottom. You will actually perceive this and it is not a figment of your imagination! Your attitude is apparently passive, in actual fact fully sensitive, and therefore active in an intelligent way. The sound of the breath is smooth and unbroken like the continuous pouring of oil from a bottle. The practice reaches its maximum power and seems to have a life of its own. You will eventually have the impression of crossing a mental state, which is like falling asleep, then suddenly returning to full awareness and realizing you are basking in a spiritual light. It's like a plane emerging from clouds into a clear transparent sky.

4. Navi Kriya

Using the same method described in *Om Japa* and without attempting to control the breath, one's awareness slowly moves up along the spinal column. The *Mantra Om* is placed in the first five *Chakras*, in the *Bindu*, and in the point between the eyebrows. The chin is then tilted down toward the throat cavity. The hands are joined with the fingers interlocked, palms face downward, and the pads of both thumbs are touching. *Om* is chanted 75 times (some schools counsel 100; let us say that a rough estimate between 75 and 100 is fine) in the navel (umbilicus) either aloud or mentally. The thumbs lightly press the navel for each *Om*. While doing this technique, a calm energy is perceived gathering in the lower-middle part of the abdomen (the *Prana* current there is called *Samana*.)

The chin is then raised – the muscles at the back of the neck are slightly contracted. The concentration shifts first to the *Bindu* and then to the third *Chakra* (moving downward in a straight line, outside the body). The hands are kept behind the back and joined by interlocking the fingers and the palms face upward with the pads of both thumbs touching. *Om* is chanted – aloud or mentally – approximately 25 times in the third *Chakra*. For every *Om*, the thumbs apply a light pressure to the lumbar vertebrae. By no means should the breath be synchronized with the chanting of *Om*.

The chin's normal position is then resumed and *Om* is mentally chanted in

reverse order from the point between the eyebrows to *Muladhara*. This is one *Navi Kriya* (it lasts between 140-160 seconds). A *kriyaban* does 4 repetitions of *Navi Kriya*.

5. Maha Mudra

One starts by bending the left leg under the body so the left heel is as near as possible to the perineum (between the scrotum and anus for males and between the anus and cervical opening for females) with the right leg fully extended in front. Ideally, but not necessarily, you want the left heel exerting pressure on the perineum. This pressure is the best means of stimulating one's awareness of the *Muladhara Chakra* in the coccygeal region at the root of the spine.

Through a deep inhalation, the energy is brought up the cerebrospinal tube to the center of the head (*Ajna Chakra*). This is a very simple and easily acquired sensation so there is no need to complicate it.

Holding the breath, stretch forward (in a relaxed way) and interlock hands so you can grasp your big toe. In this outstretched position, the chin is pressed naturally against the chest. Continue holding the breath and mentally chant *Om* in the region between the eyebrows 6-12 times. While holding the breath, return to the starting position and with a long exhalation, visualize sending the warm energy down to the base of the spinal column.

Repeat the procedure with the leg positions reversed; right heel near the perineum and the left leg outstretched.

Repeat with both legs outstretched.

This is one *Maha Mudra*; it requires about 60-80 seconds. Practice three *Maha Mudra* for a total of 9 movements.

Remark

Some schools suggest drawing the knee (or both knees, before the third movement) against the body so the thigh is as close to the chest as possible during inhalation. The interlocked fingers are placed around the knee to exert pressure on it. This helps to keep the back straight and make the inner sound of the *Anahata Chakra* audible.

Maha Mudra must be comfortable and it must not hurt! Initially, most *kriyabans* will not be able to do the forward stretch without risking back or knee injury. To avoid pain or injury, keep the outstretched leg bent at the knee until the position feels comfortable. While holding the breath in the outstretched position, contract the anal and the abdominal muscles and draw the abdominal muscles in slightly so the navel moves inward toward the lumbar center.

As we have seen, the big toe is grasped while one is in the outstretched position. Some schools insist on this detail and explain that by repeating this action on each leg, the balance between the two channels *Ida* and *Pingala* is improved. A variation is to squeeze the toenail of the big toe with the thumb of the right hand; the index and middle fingers are behind it and the left hand cups the sole of the foot. When the procedure is repeated with both legs outstretched, both toes are grasped with the interlocked hands. (A variation is that the thumbs

of each hand press the respective toenails and the index and middle fingers hold the toe from behind).

Maha Mudra incorporates all the three *Bandhas*.² When applied simultaneously with the body bent forward and without excessive contraction, it helps one to be aware of both ends of *Sushumna* and produces the feeling of an energetic current moving up the spine. In due course, one will be able to perceive the whole *Sushumna Nadi* as a radiant channel.

6. Kriya Pranayama with Short Breath

Pranayama with short breath is based upon letting the breath move freely, observing it, being conscious of each movement – pauses included – and coordinating it with the movement of energy from the *Muladhara* (first *Chakra*) to every *Chakra* and vice versa. This fact invites the energy to move freely upwards through *Sushumna* and downwards into each part of the body. This action completes that of *Maha Mudra* and prepares you for *Yoni Mudra*.

After having drawn three deep breaths, each of them ending with a fast and complete an exhalation like a sigh, your breath will be very calm. If you place your finger under both nostrils, the ingoing or outgoing breath will barely touch your finger. This is the indication that the breath is internalized as it should be in *Kriya Yoga*. Practice the following exercise and repeat the test at the end. You will feel a striking difference.

Focus your attention on the *Muladhara Chakra*. When it feels natural to inhale, inhale only what is necessary, as quickly as per instinct (about one second), then pause an instant in the second *Chakra*. When it feels natural to exhale, exhale, and pause in *Muladhara*. When it feels natural to inhale, inhale, and pause in the third *Chakra*. When it feels natural to exhale, exhale, and pause in *Muladhara*.

Continue like that, repeating the procedure between *Muladhara* and the fourth *Chakra*, *Muladhara* and the fifth *Chakra* (then *Muladhara Bindu*, *Muladhara Medulla oblongata*, *Muladhara fifth*, *Muladhara fourth*, *Muladhara third* and *Muladhara second Chakra*.) One cycle comprises 10 short breaths. Repeat the cycle until you perceive your breath is very calm – almost imperceptible.

7. Mental Pranayama

Forget about your breath. Move your awareness up and down the spine pausing in each spinal center. Start with the first, move to the second, third, and so on. After ascending to the *Bindu*, begin the descent, pausing in *Medulla oblongata*, fifth *Chakra*, fourth *Chakra*, and so on. *Om* may be mentally chanted in each *Chakra*. It is convenient to center your attention for 10-20 seconds on each *Chakra*.

The *Chakras* are like knots that can be untied if "touched" by one's

² The definition of *Bandhas* is given in Chapter 1

concentration; the secret lies in maintaining the awareness in each of them until a sensation of sweetness is felt – as if the *Chakra* were "melting". Besides a melting sensation, one may also perceive the subtle radiation of each *Chakra* in the body. This is a matter of pure awareness; a natural feeling leading to the realization that the *Chakras* are sustaining each part of the body's vitality. Sometimes, a light is perceived in the upper part of the head and a *kriyaban* is able to keep the awareness there a long time without feeling any fatigue.

The process of rising and descending through the *Chakras* is carried on as long as it is comfortable. (One complete round lasts about 2-4 minutes.) This is the most pleasing part of the routine. *Kriyabans* do not feel they are practicing a technique but enjoying a few moments of soothing relaxation. This is the moment when a deep *mental silence* settles in the consciousness and in the body. Tranquility, "*Sthir Tattwa*" (calm, static *Prana*) is experienced in the seventh *Chakra*. Lahiri Mahasaya called this state *Paravastha* or *Kriyar Paravastha* - "the state that comes after the action of *Kriya*". If, through sheer willpower, such a state were brought to awareness as often as possible amid one's daily activities, the results would be extraordinary.

Remarks

There is a subtle difference between *Om Japa* and *mental Pranayama*. *Om Japa* before *Kriya Pranayama* is designed to stimulate each *Chakra*. One pauses only a short time in each one to vibrate the *Om Mantra*.

During *mental Pranayama*, one is more passive, more willing to perceive than to stimulate and the pauses are much longer. When the awareness stays for 20 seconds upon each *Chakra*, and the *kriyaban* is relaxed there comes the perception of a pleasurable sweet sensation and the breath slows down noticeably. Some inner sounds as well as hues of light in the screen of *Kutastha* deepen the contact with the *Omkar* dimension.

Some *Yoga* schools advise visualizing the *Chakra's* specific color (red, orange, yellow... like the sequence of the rainbow colors). A *kriyaban* does not need this in order to realize the location and the vibration of each *Chakra*. In time, a *kriyaban* gains the ability to single out the different rates of vibration of each *Chakra*, which is crucial in reaching the final goal of *Kriya Yoga*.

8. Yoni Mudra

At night, before going to bed, begin your practice by calming the whole psychophysical system with a short *Kriya* routine (how to organize a short *Kriya* routine is explained in the next paragraph).

To practice *Yoni Mudra*, raise the energy with a deep inhalation into the central part of the head. If you are able to do *Kechari Mudra*, press the tongue firmly on the highest point inside the nasal pharynx – otherwise leave the tongue in its normal relaxed position. Close every "opening" in the head – the ears with the thumbs, the eyelids with the index fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers, the lips with the ring and the little fingers – so all the energy "lights up" the region between the eyebrows.

Throughout the practice, both elbows are parallel to the floor and pointing

out to the side. Do not let them drop, prop them up somehow, if necessary. During this special light-witnessing act, the index fingers must not put any pressure on the eyes – this would be harmful and serve no purpose! If a *kriyaban* is distracted by the pressure of the index fingers on the eyelids, he draws the eyelids down with the index fingers and applies pressure on the corners of the eyes – on the upper cheekbones.

By holding the breath and mentally repeating *Om* several times, observe the light of the "spiritual eye" that is gathering and intensifying. The light condenses into a golden ring. Hold the breath as long as is comfortable and until the necessity to breathe out distracts your attention. Exhale and bring the awareness down along the spine. *Yoni Mudra* is usually performed only once.

Inhaling deeply and holding the breath usually causes discomfort after a few seconds. To reduce the discomfort and make it possible to deepen the practice, practice the following:

At the end of a moderate inhalation (not a typical *Kriya Pranayama* one but a shorter one), a *kriyaban* fully plugs all the head openings except the nostrils, exhales a very small quantity of air, then immediately closes the nostrils. The thoracic muscles are to be relaxed as if one intended to begin a new inhalation: this will give the sensation that the breath has become quiet in the area between the throat and the point between the eyebrows. In this situation, concentration on the point between the eyebrows and the repetition of *Om* several times can be enjoyed to its fullest.

Traditional instruction advises increasing *Om* repetitions by one per day up to a maximum of 200. Of course, forcing is always to be avoided.

First suggestions about the routine

The ideal time for practicing the main Kriya routine

Enjoy the main routine either before breakfast or before lunch at noon or late afternoon before dinner, or at night at least 2-3 hours after eating.

The complete routine, which we have already implicitly given by numbering the techniques from 1 to 8, does not work for everyone. Many utilize *Maha Mudra* and *Navi Kriya* as preliminary techniques and avoid techniques requiring movement after *Kriya Pranayama*. They find also that *Kriya Pranayama with short breath* is not necessary. Their routine is very simple and extremely enjoyable: Talabya Kriya → Maha Mudra → Navi Kriya → Kriya Pranayama → Mental Pranayama. A good choice is to lengthen the practice of *mental Pranayama* to occupy 1/3 of the whole time.

About a short routine at night ending with Yoni Mudra

If the main routine is practiced at night, you can simply add *Yoni Mudra* at the end. Otherwise, during the main routine avoid *Yoni Mudra*, while at night create special conditions for enjoying its full power. At night, you can start your practice with *Maha Mudra*, then *Pranayama with short breath*, then *Yoni Mudra*. Then remain concentrated as long as possible at the point between the eyebrows trying to perceive the light in *Kutastha*. *Yoni Mudra* generates such a concentration of energy at the point between the eyebrows that the quality of the ensuing sleep changes for the better. In other words, after crossing the subconscious layers, your awareness may succeed in reaching the so-called "super conscious" state.

Remark

There are some schools that state that *Yoni Mudra* can't be practiced during the day. You can actually practice it! However the technique is best done in the deep calmness of the night, when silence is all around and one is totally and perfectly relaxed.

About Kriya Pranayama in three parts

In the beginning, only the first and the second part of *Kriya Pranayama* are practiced: usually 12-24 times each. Occasionally e.g. during a longer meditation once in a week, you can add more repetitions; in that case, it is fine to experience the third part of *Kriya Pranayama* also.

Warning

Do not practice only the third part of *Kriya Pranayama*: a routine totally based on a strong concentration on the *Sahasrara* is not appropriate for beginning or medium level students. Developing a strong magnet in *Sahasrara* through the third part of *Kriya Pranayama* is the most powerful way of stimulating the *Kundalini* awakening. This implies bringing up a lot of information from the subconscious mind to the surface. (See also the discussion in Chapter 9.) You can experience an entire range of negative moods, from marked alienation from reality to panic *attacks*.

Final remark about mental Pranayama

You must never forget to give the highest importance to the soothing phase of *mental Pranayama*. A *Kriya* routine that does not end with *mental Pranayama* is like an orchestra going on stage, unpacking the instruments, tuning them and then leaving at once! It is this phase that brings everything together; the ripples in the mind's lake are stilled, the awareness becomes transparent, and the *Last Reality* is revealed. It is a diffuse calmness; the mind is at rest and silent and gains the energy necessary to be more acutely alert. It is like a spiral which gradually and systematically takes care of all the levels of one's being: it is a

healing process.

The value of *Mental Pranayama* becomes apparent when important decisions have to be taken. One has the impression that nothing can get in the way and that even the greatest difficulties will dissipate. Inside the perfect transparency of an inner order, all problems are solved. One is born to *Kriya* through the engaging practice of *mental Pranayama*: it projects us into sheer heaven and its beauty overflows our lives.

".... it's hard to stay angry when there's so much beauty in the world. Sometimes I feel I'm seeing it all at once and I'm overwhelmed. My heart feels it's about to burst...until I remember to relax and stop trying to hold on to it. And then the beauty flows through me like rain. And I can't feel anything but gratitude for every single moment of my stupid little life. (slightly modified from the movie *American Beauty*; 1999) "

CHAPTER 7

TECHNIQUES OF THE HIGHER KRIYAS

This Chapter is devoted to those students who have shown a passionate commitment to the practice of *Kriya*. The right moment to study this Chapter is 6-12 months after practicing *Kriya Yoga* daily, when there is a genuine longing to deepen the meditation experience.

We warn the reader that the following techniques are not taught in the same order by other schools. The order of exposition adopted here reflects the order of their utilization in a complete routine.

Theoretical vision

Let's make some preliminary remarks concerning Lahiri Mahasaya's theoretical vision of any authentic spiritual path. He essentially explains that a spiritual path foresees four footsteps in which four internal knots are to be unfastened – the knots being: tongue, heart, coccyx, coccyx-kutastha.

The knot of the tongue is connected with the *Medulla oblongata* and with the fifth *Chakra*; the knot of the heart is connected to the fourth *Chakra*; the knot of the coccyx is connected with *Chakra Muladhara* and, finally, the last knot is linked both with the first *Chakra* and with the opening of the so-called *third eye* between the eyebrows.

Let us attempt to put ourselves in the place of those who are about to familiarize themselves with the procedures called *Higher Kriyas*. Students should not be obsessed with gaining tangible results at once, but at least understand if they are proceeding in the right direction. Becoming familiar with this simple and effective theoretical vision is therefore necessary, for without this they risk perceiving *Kriya Yoga* as too chaotic a set of techniques among which they are not able to differentiate those upon which they should concentrate, practicing them regularly for months at the exclusion of all others. Without this attitude, students relinquish *Kriya* practice after some unhappy attempts to devise a satisfying routine. Furthermore, a good theory helps a student to avoid wrong attitudes and unfortunate choices that could hinder the process of conquering the doubts and fears, settling in the solid territory of meditation-born intuition.

Four knots

The tongue knot is related to the physiological fact that our tongue is normally unable to touch the uvula and, consequently, enter the nasal pharynx. Because of this, we are not kept connected with the great reservoir of energy existing in the *Sahasrara* region. Unfastening such knot (*Jihuah – or Jihva – Granthi Ved*) means the freedom to access this inexhaustible internal source through *Kechari*

Mudra.

The obtainment of such *Mudra* and its use in the techniques of *Kriya* implies that a subtle process of transformation is going to happen in our psycho-physical system. We are about to notice a quieting of all useless, unwanted thoughts and intrusive mental processes, and a rekindling of the vital force in the body. A subtle substance (*Amrit*) begins to trickle down through the tongue into the spine and then in the whole body.

The afore-quoted good results are partially accomplished by turning back the tongue tip so it touches the middle of the upper palate at the point where the hard palate becomes soft. This position is easy and can be accomplished right away.

As for the practice of *Talabya Kriya*, actually it should not be considered a simple lingual frenulum stretching process. *Talabya Kriya* also closes an important circuit. When the tongue sticks to the palate and the mouth is opened, in that instant the energetic split between our body and the reserve of static *Prana* located in the upper part of our head is momentarily healed.

When *Kechari Mudra* proper is attained, all becomes easier on our spiritual path. It becomes easier to perceive the exact location of *Medulla oblongata*, to listen to astral sounds, and to merge with the *Omkar* aspect of the Divine.

This knot should not be confused with the obstacle that is located in the center between the eyebrows – this obstacle is linked with the fourth knot.

The heart knot obstructs the downward journey of static *Prana* from *Sahasrara* toward *Muladhara*. Unfastening this knot (*Hridaya Granti Ved*) means bringing spiritual realization into the daily life. The mind is restored to health and the superficial emotions calm down. If, after having carried out your duties conscientiously, you avoid distractions and useless chatters, a conscious absorption in the spiritual reality spontaneously manifests, without any effort on your part. The mind rests in stillness and the heart is full of inexpressible joy.

It has been explained that the consciousness tunes with the element "air" (the fourth of five *Tattwas*.) For a *kriyaban*, the theory of the *Tattwas* [the five subtle elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether (space)] is not a theme of useless speculation. Everything that exists in the universe is a combination of these five forms of energy. *Tattwas* are a concrete series of states of consciousness, whose intimate essence is experienced in the last part of the devotee's journey toward the *Absolute Consciousness*.

Tuning with the air *Tattwa* allows a person enter a sublime state. This *Tattwa* checks the cardiac plexus which controls the automatic phenomenon of breath. A *kriyaban* working upon unfastening the heart knot soon notices how the breathing process tends to calm down.

The knot of the coccyx prevents a *kriyaban* from entering *Sushumna* and moving toward *Kutastha*. This fact keeps the veil of illusion real. Unfastening such knot (*Muladhara Granti Ved*) means opening the door to inexhaustible spiritual realization. The consciousness of the division between sexual energy, love

energy and spiritual energy is overcome forever. That division is the cause of countless conflicts. Birth to the spiritual life means their end.

This knot begins to be loosened by the practice of *Navi Kriya*. *Prana* and *Apana* unite in the region of the navel by the action of the *Samana* current. They are guided in the channel of *Sushumna* through the action of *Maha Mudra*.

The last phase of *Kriya* path happens when the awareness starts to climb the *Sushumna* channel and moves toward *Kutastha*. *Prana* is now perfectly tranquil in all the body; the more resistant forces that prevent the vision of the Spiritual Light of *Kutastha* are going to be dissolved. A perpetual stay of *Kundalini* in the *Ajna Chakra* is gradually achieved.

Before reaching this highly advanced state, two important realizations should happen at the level of the third and of the fourth *Chakra*.

Let us first consider the reality that in Internal Alchemy (Taoism) is known as *Dantian*. This center is not just a theoretical hypothesis but a tangible reality. It is located about two and one-half inches below the belly button and about one and one-half inches inside: it can be visualized as a ball about one and one-half inches in diameter. This is the place where a *kriyaban* recognizes the "note" which embodies our will to live in the physical body. (In *Kriya Yoga* books you don't find expressions like: "Coming back to the center", "Cultivation of the spiritual embryo" or "The birth of the golden flower." You find expressions like: "The process of Self realization begins in the navel center" but this describes the same event.)

The realization created in the *Dantian* ascends then into the heart region. A *kriyaban* attains a devotion that knows no human limitation. During the ecstatic rapture the body may appear as a corpse while the soul burns in a perfect joy. When these two initial steps become solid through further effort, a *kriyaban's* awareness merges with the Spiritual Light (in *Kutastha*) and reaches the thresholds of Cosmic Consciousness.

List of Kriya Yoga techniques and their relationship to the work upon the four knots

(The underlined techniques are described in the previous Chapter)

[I] Tongue Knot

Talabya Kriya

Om Japa in the Chakras

Kriya Pranayama

[I.1] *Kechari Mudra as a technique complete in itself*

[I.2] *Kechari Mudra coupled with Kriya Pranayama*

[II] Heart Knot

[II.1] *Basic form of Thokar*

[II.2] *Advanced form of Thokar*

[III] Muladhara Knot

[III.1] *Complete form of Thokar*

Navi Kriya

Maha Mudra

[IV] Muladhara-Kustastha Knot

Kriya Pranayama with short breath

Mental Pranayama

[IV.1] *Omkar Kriya – Omkar Pranayama*

[IV.2] *Omkar Kriya – Internalization of the practice of Thokar*

[IV.3] *Omkar Kriya – Gayatri Kriya*

Yoni Mudra

[V] Alternative procedures cooperating with the second and third part

[V.1] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Amantrak)*

[V.2] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Samantrak)*

[V.3] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Thokar)*

[VI] Alternative procedures cooperating with the fourth part

[VI.1] *Micro movement Tribhangamurari (Amantrak)*

[VI.2] *Micro movement Tribhangamurari (Samantrak)*

[I] Tongue Knot

Those who want to succeed in this practice must have their *Talabya Kriya* checked. Many do not do it correctly, not having understood how to make their tongue adhere to the upper palate before opening the mouth and stretching the frenulum. Sometimes, even when they are shown in person, they are still not able to do it correctly. Here I can only emphasize that the main mistake is concentrating too much on where to place the tip of the tongue. In a correct *Talabya Kriya*, the tip of the tongue has no role! The suction effect is obtained with the whole body of the tongue!

After several months of regular practice of *Talabya Kriya*, a *kriyaban* may try to attempt *Kechari Mudra*. The test is whether the tip of the tongue can touch the uvula. If so, then for a few minutes a day use the fingers to push the base of the tongue inward until the tip goes beyond the uvula and touches the pharynx behind it. One day, the tip of the tongue will enter a centimeter or so into the nasal pharynx but slip out when the fingers are removed. After some more days, on removing the fingers, the tip of the tongue will remain "trapped" in that position. This happens because the soft palate (the part from which the uvula hangs) is soft, movable and acts like an elastic band and creates a hook. This prevents the tongue from slipping out and returning to its usual flat position. This is the turning point.

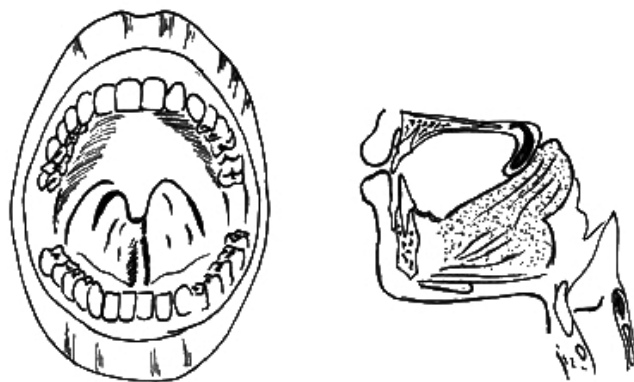


Figure 3. Kechari Mudra

Notice how *Talabya Kriya* and *Kechari Mudra* are completely different! (Compare Figure 3 with Figure 2 in Chapter 6). Open your mouth in front of a mirror during the first part of *Talabya Kriya* to see the hollow parts on each side of the fraenum which appear isolated from the body of the tongue; during *Kechari Mudra*, it is the uvula that comes forward and only the root of the tongue is visible.

Hence, by striving each day to practice at least 6-12 *Kriya Pranayama* with the tongue in this position – despite some discomfort such as an increase in salivation, swallowing, and occasional interruptions to reestablish the position – its practice becomes easy and comfortable. The sense of irritation and the increase in salivation are soon left behind. After about three weeks of practicing in this way, you should be able to reach the same position without using the fingers. The tongue will be able to insert itself into the nasal-pharynx cavity. There will still be enough space left in the cavity to inhale and exhale through the nose.

The only problem might be that during the first three weeks of *Kechari Mudra*, you experience "dizziness" and fogged up mental faculties. Be prepared for this eventuality and consider abstaining from driving and any work involving a significant proportion of risk during this time.

[I.1] *Kechari Mudra as a technique complete in itself*

There are two main stages of *Kechari Mudra*. After several months of tireless practice of the afore-described stage 1, one achieves stage 2, where the tongue reaches the junction of the nasal passage inside the hole in the palate. The soft tissue above the holes in the internal part of the nostrils is alluded to in *Kriya* literature as the "uvula above the uvula". The tip of the tongue reaches this small area and remains "stuck" there comfortably.

According to *Kriya* literature, the tongue can be pushed even farther up. Any good anatomy book will reveal that the tongue cannot extend any farther when it fills up the nasal pharynx. That assertion should therefore be understood as a hint to what a normal person thinks is happening. Actually, by extending the tongue to its limit, it is possible to experience a great attraction toward the region between the eyebrows along with the sensation of having reached, with the tip of the tongue, a higher position.

The same literature also affirms that through *Kechari* one is able to perceive "Amrita", "Nectar", the elixir of life – a sweet tasting fluid trickling down from the brain onto the tongue and then into the body. To have this experience, the tip of the tongue should touch three points in sequence: the uvula, a small asperity on the roof of the nasal pharynx under the pituitary gland, and the soft tissue above the nasal septum. The tip of the tongue should rotate on each of these spots for at least 20-30 seconds; then, in the manner of sipping a liquid or testing a food, an essence will be savored on the tongue's surface. The exercise should be repeated several times during the day.³

Kechari Mudra causes the life force to be withdrawn from thought processes. Bypassing the mind's energy system and changing both the path and the direction

³ I'm unable to comment on the importance of sipping the nectar since I haven't had the experience nor, I admit, have I even tried to have it. I'm sharing this information for the sake of accuracy and completeness. It may fascinate a *kriyaban* but after an initial period of intense excitement, it is forgotten.

of *Prana* flow, *Kechari* connects our awareness with the Spiritual dimension whose seat is in the upper part of the brain. The internal chatter ceases; silence and transparency become the features of one's consciousness. The mind works in a more restrained way and enjoys an essential rest; each thought becomes more concrete and precise. When, during the daily activities *Kechari Mudra* is practiced, moments of pure calmness and mental silence fill one's entire being! Sometimes, mental silence turns into an explosion of inner joy.

[I.2] *Kechari Mudra coupled with Kriya Pranayama*

Kechari Mudra enables a *kriyaban* to take a giant step toward perfecting *Kriya Pranayama*. During *Kriya Pranayama* with *Kechari Mudra*, the exhalation arising in the nasal pharynx has a fine flute-like sound like a faint whistle. Some schools call it the *Shakti Mantra*. It has been likened to the "flute of Krishna". Blowing gently on the edge of a sheet of paper approximates the sound. Lahiri Mahasaya described it as "similar to blowing air through a keyhole". He described it as "a razor which cuts off everything related to the mind". It has the power to cut out any external distracting factors including thoughts, and comes at the maximal point of relaxation. When distraction and anxiety arise, the sound vanishes.

Practicing *Kriya Pranayama* in this way and enjoying its aftereffects is an enchanting and astonishing experience and one of the best moments in a *kriyaban's* life. Cultivating the perfection of this sound and concentrating firmly on it, means creating the best basis to arouse the *Om* sound in a way stronger than can be achieved through the practice of the second part of *Kriya Pranayama*. Literature on *Kriya Yoga* explains that when this event happens, the *Omkar* experience acquires the dynamism of *Kundalini*; the soul travels through the spinal cord and burns in the joy of *Samadhi*.

Modesty is always welcome but when this result is achieved, the positive euphoria is so overwhelming that it cannot be contained (like finding Aladdin's magic lamp.) In *Kriya* literature, it is said that those who realize a perfect *Pranayama*, can achieve everything through it. Well, if we dream of a faultless *Kriya Pranayama*, then what we have described matches the ideal of perfection.

Personal reflection:

However great the effect of *Kechari Mudra*, I firmly believe it is important but not indispensable. P.Y.'s decision to allow initiation into the *Higher Kriyas* to those unable to practice *Kechari Mudra* has my full approval. When the tongue tip is turned back and up toward the roof of the mouth, you perceive just the same striking effect of internalization that gives you the chance of fully enjoying the *Higher Kriyas*.

I believe Lahiri Mahasaya also granted *Higher Initiation* to those who could not achieve *Kechari Mudra*. My belief is based on his attitude and his partaking in human suffering. I cannot conceive that the achievement of *Kechari* was intended to create a sharp division among people. On one hand, we have the very proud *kriyabans*, deceived into believing they are more evolved than others and on the other hand, there are those

who are hopelessly depressed for failing in something that depends not on effort but only on physical constitution.

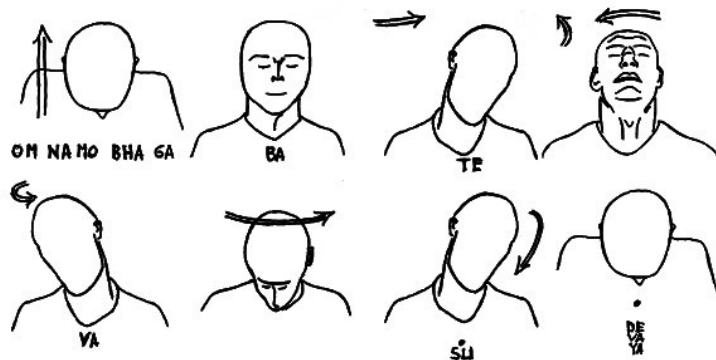
[II] Heart Knot

Thokar is a technique based on directing the calm *Prana* – collected in the head through *Kriya Pranayama* – towards the location of one (usually the fourth) or more *Chakras*, by a particular movement of the head. Guiding *Prana* into the *Anahata Chakra*, a light grows in the region between the eyebrows. This fosters the breathless state. By increasing the concentration on the spiritual light, the lights of all the other *Chakras* are revealed. The practice of *Thokar* is to be deepened throughout the years in order to get the ability to enter the state of *Samadhi* with just one movement of the head. It might have happened that Lahiri Mahasaya knew this technique since youth. Some forms of prayer he learned were mild forms of *Thokar*. It was his genius to develop it to the utmost perfection. Studying the practices of the Sufis, ⁴ we discover that *Thokar* is a variant of the Sufi's *Dhikr*. *Dhikr* is the practice of the "memory" of the Divine, which is brought about by repeating a particular short prayer during the day and by guiding it, during moments of seclusion or group devotional practice, into particular centers of the body through specific head movements.

[II.1] Basic form of *Thokar*

(*Thokar* with one rotation – this procedure is called Second Kriya by many schools, Third Kriya by P.Y.'s disciples)

Through *Thokar*, the energy and the intense awareness that has settled in *Ajna Chakra*, is directed into the *Anahata Chakra*. This event causes the "death" of the mind: a particular state of ecstatic "absorption" begins to manifest. A *kriyaban* perceives a feeling of devotion (*Bhakti*) emanating from the heart *Chakra*. *Thokar* is practiced after *Kriya Pranayama* and after *Navi Kriya*, if possible with the tongue in *Kechari Mudra*.



⁴ See the studies conducted by Gardet and M. M. Anawati, esp. Gardet in *Revue Thomiste* (1952-3)

Figure 4. Rotation of the head in the basic form of Thokar

Practical instructions

The syllables of the *Vasudeva* Mantra ("Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya") are mentally placed in each *Chakra* location.

With the chin resting on your chest, inhale while simultaneously raising your awareness along the spinal column, touching each *Chakra* with the first six syllable of the *Mantra* (*Om* is placed in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second, *Mo* in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth and *Ba* in *Bindu*.)⁵ Raise the chin as if following the inner movement. The hands (with interlocked fingers) are placed on the navel area to create a mental pressure on the first three *Chakras*. Contract moderately the muscles at the base of the spine. The breath produces only a slight, weak sound in the throat or it comes out soundless. When the chin is up and horizontal, the inhalation ends, and the awareness is in the *Bindu*.

Hold your breath. Hold the muscle contraction at the base of the spine. The head begins its rotation by moving to the left shoulder (left ear moves slightly toward the left shoulder, the face does not turn left or right and the movement is free of all bouncing); *Te* is thought in the *Medulla oblongata*. The head tilts back a little and in a sweeping arc reaches the right shoulder, (the right ear coming near the right shoulder), the syllable *Va* is thought in the cervical *Chakra*. The rotation proceeds, the head bends forward just a little and moves left until the left ear is near the left shoulder (the face is not turned to the left).

From this position, the chin is tilted down diagonally as if to strike the center of the chest, while simultaneously *Su* is intensely vibrated in the heart *Chakra*. Through this last movement, a kind of hitting is felt in the heart *Chakra*. A short pause follows: just what is needed to be enraptured in the radiation of energy emanating from that *Chakra*. The contraction at the base of the spinal column is eased off; via a very subtle exhalation the remaining syllables of the *Mantra* are "placed" in the first three *Chakras* -- *De* into the third one, *Va* into the second one, and *Ya* into the first one. While doing this, the head is usually kept down. The duration of this process is about 24 seconds. Repeat the procedure 12 times.

At the end of this practice, retrieve psychological and physical immobility by practicing at least 12 *Kriya Pranayama*. Then practice *Pranayama with short breath* followed by *mental Pranayama*.

For several weeks, a *kriyaban* is guided to perform this technique 12 times a day, then to gradually increase the number of repetitions of one a day up to 200 repetitions. After reaching 200 repetitions, or after six months of 36 repetitions per day, a *kriyaban* can start the practice of the higher level of *Thokar*.

⁵ I am sure the reader knows the correct pronunciation of the *Mantra*; phonetic symbols are not included. Notice that in the *Bindu*, we don't mentally verbalize *Va* but *Ba*: this convention has established itself over the years.

Remark

Do not allow the weight of the head to be the sole force pushing the chin toward the chest: letting your head simply drop would definitely be harmful. A mindful physical effort is needed to lower the chin.

When you practice over 50 repetitions, the movements of the head should be only hinted at: the chin does not come close to the chest and the striking of the fourth *Chakra* is mainly achieved by the sheer power of mental concentration. If you have any difficulty whatsoever, stop before reaching 200 repetitions.

The presence of physical problems (the cervical vertebrae are indeed vulnerable) may require practicing on alternate days. It is better to add more cycles over time rather than face the prospect of experiencing continuous head and neck pain throughout the entire day!

Thokar and the breathless state

Completing the 200 repetitions of *Thokar* is a deed of great importance. As for the possibility of obtaining the breathless state, this effort can be compared only to the intensive practice of *Japa*.

Breathless state means that the breath is entirely non-existent. It does not simply mean that the breath becomes gradually quieter or that after a long hyperventilation, the breath is held like free / breath-hold divers do.

In order to reach the breathless state, one needs on the average two to three years of regular *Kriya* practice. One needs not only the overall effect of the *First Kriya* techniques but also the action of the *Omkar Kriya* and of *Thokar*, important for its direct effect on the heart ganglia in the spine which directly control the breathing automatic reflex.

This wonderful event can happen during the practice of any *Kriya* technique (in particular during the practice of *mental Pranayama*.) It can also happen during the day, far from the moment of meditation, for example when contemplating something so beautiful that one's own aesthetic sense vibrates.

Before considering the advanced form of *Thokar* we counsel you to read the third part of the book and start the practice of *Japa*.

[II.2] *Advanced form of Thokar*

(*Thokar* with many rotations holding one's breath – this procedure is commonly called Third Kriya or Ucca Kriya, meaning higher Kriya. P.Y.'s disciples call it Fourth Kriya.)

This technique is a remarkable acceleration of the *basic form of Thokar*. The action of *Thokar* is repeated over and over while extending the length of the state in which the breath is held (*Kumbhaka*.) In *Kriya* literature, the explanation is that the heart knot is **struck** by the *Thokar basic procedure* and then **cut** by the *advanced form of Thokar*.

Practical instructions

Practice after *Kriya Pranayama* and after *Navi Kriya*, if possible with the tongue in *Kechari Mudra*.

After inhaling (with *Om, Na, Mo...*) and raising the *Prana* to the upper part of the lungs, partially relax the muscles of the thoracic cage as if you were going to begin a new inhalation. (The act of sealing the lungs (trachea) as when diving, should be avoided.) In this relaxed mood, repeat numerous cycles of the head movements unhurriedly. Consequently the mental chanting of *Te* in *Medulla oblongata*, *Va* in the cervical and *Su* in the heart *Chakra* is done several times (*Te, Va, Su, Te, Va, Su, Te, Va, Su ...*) while holding the breath. Stop the procedure and exhale when feeling discomfort!

Then slowly exhale and place the syllables *De, Va, Ya* in *Chakras* three, two, one respectively. While doing this, keep your head down. This practice is done rigorously once a day. To give an idea of the speed of the movements, the entire process from inhalation to exhalation with 12 repetitions of the rotation of the head (each rotation concluding with the movement of the chin toward the chest) lasts around 70-80 seconds.

At the end of the procedure restore the physical and mental immobility by practicing at least 12 *Kriya Pranayama*. Then practice *Kriya Pranayama* with short breath followed by *mental Pranayama*. Then pause with the awareness centered in the light of *Kutastha*.

According to tradition, a *kriyaban* is guided to perform this technique with 12 rotations, then to gradually increase the number of repetitions by one a day up to 200 repetitions. This *Kriya* is considered mastered when one reaches 200 rotations without interrupting the *Kumbhaka* state.

Remarks

Avoid at all costs any attempts to thwart physiological processes: trying to accomplish a high number of rotations, doing them quickly, and being obsessed with holding the breath amounts to violence against one's body. Start with 12 rotations and increase by one a day. Fill the upper part of the thorax to its utmost possible extent with *Prana* – like a container filled to the brim with water. Simplify the dynamic and the physical intensity of the movements. Move the chin toward the chest before completing the head rotation. Namely, after rotating your head from left to right, let your chin "fall" toward the chest from the right side, then lift it to left side and continue with the rotations. By increasing the rotations, the movements of the head should be only hinted at and the chin should not come close to the chest.

The Mantra *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya* contains another Mantra: *Te Va Su* (Tat tvam asi = Thou are That.) The outer is a dualistic Mantra (Namo=I bow to God which is different from me); the inner Mantra is non dualistic. During the practice of the advanced form of *Thokar* you go on repeating: "Thou are That, thou are That...." Reflect on this!

How to perfect the advanced form of Thokar

Let us first gain proficiency with a particular way of practicing the advanced form of *Thokar*. When you feel you have neared your limit holding your breath, while keeping the chest expanded and the abdominal muscles and diaphragm perfectly immobile, release a minimal (almost imperceptible) sip of air whenever the chin is lowered toward the chest and let an imperceptible sip of air enter whenever the chin is brought up. Do not do any specific act of inhaling or exhaling: relax and allow the phenomenon we have described happen of its own accord. The sensation will always be that of not breathing at all. Thanks to the effect of this practice upon the ganglion that regulate the cardiac frequency, this frequency diminishes and the practice happens in the best conditions, bestowing great satisfactions.

At this point we are still far from the ideal practice of this form of Thokar. What we have described is only a preliminary exercise. You may think it's invalid (because you cheat) but if you repeat it a sufficient number of times (usually it's a matter of a couple of months), you will discover that it has the power of making you taste the state of *Antar Kevala Kumbhaka* (absence of breath, when the diaphragm is tensed and the air is inside the lungs) during the dynamic procedure of *Thokar*.⁶

Inhale deeply, filling the lungs completely. Expand your rib cage and keep it expanded after completing the inhalation. Try to remain in the same psycho-physical condition you instinctively adopt when you are going to take another "sip" of air. Focus your attention on the air and *Prana* filling the upper part of your rib cage: lungs, breath, and *Prana* are immobile as if frozen in the upper part of the lungs. Now, the decisive procedure is to move your awareness like an ant, climbing the innermost channel of the spine millimeter by millimeter from *Muladhara* upwards. Practice this holding your breath and mentally chanting *Om, Om, Om...* rapidly (about two chants of *Om* per second). This action should be very intense: put in it the distilled experience of years of *Kriya*. Persist with it *Om-Om-Om-Om-Om-Om* ...

Starting from the base of the spine, after no more than 15-20 seconds you'll have reached the heart *Chakra*. What you will perceive is a greater freedom from the breath. While remaining in this state, practice the advanced form of *Thokar*. You will discover how beautiful and comforting is the experience of rotating your head while the breath has actually vanished! The breath seems frozen, dissolved in some inexplicable way in the body. Retrieve this experience in the days to come. Remember: it is a matter of inner realization – an instinct which is discovered in time, provided that the previous practices have been brought ahead honestly and with acute intelligence.

⁶ The breathless state with empty lungs and a relaxed rib cage during *mental Pranayama* is called *Bahir Kevala Kumbhaka* – as we have explained, this state is to be achieved through the basic form of *Thokar*.

One day, the spiritual Light in the form of a "*Bindu*" (a dot) appears both in the heart *Chakra* and in *Kutastha*. The mind is flooded with devotion. The feeling of intoxication experienced in the heart center is fantastic. Such profusion of internal joy often seems to overcome *kriyabans*, challenging their endurance limit.

"My worship is of a very strange kind. Holy water is not required. No special utensils are necessary. Even flowers are redundant. In this worship, all gods have disappeared, and emptiness has merged with euphoria."

(Lahiri Mahasaya)

Remark

The state of *Antar Kevala Kumbhaka* is also essential to bring the practice of *Yoni Mudra* to perfection. It is also useful to perfect *Kriya Pranayama*, setting it upon the ideal timing of 22+22 (we are going to discuss this in Chapter 12.)

Furthermore, we have explained that the procedure of *Antar Kevala Kumbhaka* is utilized during *Mahasamadhi*. What happens at that moment was described to us with these words:

"Have a deep inhalation, then a pause, and then come up along the spine while inwardly chanting OM, guiding your soul toward the Divine Eternal Brahma with the intention of never reentering the body. "

[III] Muladhara Knot

[III.1] Complete form of Thokar

(Thokar with many rotations holding the breath, whose action is directed not only to the fourth *Chakra* but also to the third, second and first. This procedure is commonly called Fourth Kriya or "Purna Kriya" which means "Complete Kriya." Many Kriya schools do not teach this technique preferring either to erase it completely or substitute it with the sweeter, more docile and manageable practice of Thokar Tribhangamurari which we are going to introduce later.)

In the *Advanced form of Thokar*, we have applied a very strong psychophysical pressure on the heart *Chakra*; we now extend this pressure on each *Chakra* below using the same procedure.

Description of the procedure

Begin by practicing the *Advanced form of Thokar*, thus acting upon the heart *Chakra* but only 12 times. After this is completed, exhale (with *De Va Ya*) and concentrate upon the third *Chakra* and repeat the previous procedure. This means that each time you lower your chin to vibrate the syllable *Su*, you mentally direct the stroke toward the third *Chakra*. The muscles near that *Chakra* can be slightly contracted, just to help the process. At the end of 12 repetitions of *Te Va Su*, exhale (with *De Va Ya*) and focus on the irradiation that departs from the third

Chakra. Pause, perceiving a particular state which is characteristic of that *Chakra*. In time, you will perceive a particular color in the point between the eyebrows and also listen to a particular sound.

Repeat the procedure in the second and in the first *Chakra*. Don't skip the pauses to perceive the irradiation that emanates from the second and from the first *Chakra*.

Remain longer in *Muladhara*. Feel how the energy rises like waves of a tide growing higher and higher, reaching a *Chakra*, then again falling down and moving from the base of the spine to a higher center.

This procedure must be completed by *Navi Kriya* and *Maha Mudra*. You will receive a great benefit by repeating the procedure (*Advanced form of Thokar*) for the second, then the third and finally for the heart *Chakra* (and only then practice *Navi Kriya* and *Maha Mudra*.)

Remark

This procedure requires great care because it affects the person's behavior during daily life. You could excessively react to trivial impediments and irrational behavior. In short, some sharp personality traits of yours might surface with a force that in some cases could be "destructive." Obviously, they do not appear out of nothing, they are not caused by the technique – they express what you had held within you for a long time. (We will reconsider this delicate point at the end of the following Chapter.)

[IV] Muladhara-Kustastha Knot

Omkar Kriya techniques have one feature in common: a *Mantra* made of one or more syllables is mentally placed inside a *Chakra* and repeated there many times until a threefold effect emerges:

- [1] The perception of a micro internal movement (whose characteristic is oscillatory or circular) inside the *Chakra*.
- [2] The experience of listening to internal sounds.
- [3] The perception of spiritual light.

The *Omkar Kriya* techniques are an evolution of the procedures of *Kriya Pranayama* and *Thokar*. "Evolution" means that while you are practicing them you have all the effects of *Pranayama* and of *Thokar* but you are barely breathing, and you maintain immobility.

It is reasonable that these practices have to be done after the practice of *Thokar*. However there are schools that put the practice of *Omkar Kriyas* before that of *Thokar*.

What does Kriya meditation mean?

"What do you meditate about?" Often we hear this question. People find it

difficult to understand what is the prescribed subject of meditation in the practice of *Kriya Yoga*. Meditation does not consist of the elaboration of lofty thoughts supported by fervid imagination. Not in the least! The thoughts are destined to calm down. This is the starting point of meditation.

Not only that: sooner or later, a *kriyaban* listens to a distant sound of a long-sustaining bell. Well, *Kriya* meditation means to deepen that experience, to become totally absorbed in it. Each part of our psyche will be harmoniously affected. A first-ever *Bhakti* (devotion) will arise spontaneously, cross the wall of the psychological dimension and make life and spiritual experience indistinguishable. Reality will appear as transfigured – similar to a light dusting of snow that reduces all asperities. This divine sound, which will expand in the full *Omkar* experience, will inspire our decisions and sustain us in difficult moments, when the events of life conspire to make us arduous to abide by the daily habit of seclusion.

Let us introduce now three procedures that surely and safely lead to the meditation state: *Omkar Pranayama*, *Internalization of the practice of Thokar*, and the so called *Gayatri Kriya*. (It goes without saying that the ideal practice of these procedures is with *Kechari Mudra*.)

[IV.1] *Omkar Pranayama*

First part: with fragmented breath

The hands, with fingers intertwined, rest on the abdomen. Inhalation and exhalation are fragmented into 6 + 6 parts. Starting with your chin on the chest, inhale moving your awareness upwards along the spinal column while simultaneously raising the chin slowly as if to accompany and push the energy up. The syllables of the *Vasudeva* Mantra ("*Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*") are mentally placed in each *Chakra* location, while making a short pause in each. During the first "sip" of inhalation, the concentration is on the *Muladhara*, where the syllable *Om* is ideally "put"; during the second "sip", the concentration is on the second *Chakra*, where the syllable *Na* is ideally put ... and so on, until *Ba* is put in the *Bindu*, the inhalation is completed and the chin is horizontal.

The exhaling breath too is divided into six punctuated parts or pulses. While lowering the chin at a slow pace, the awareness comes down along the spinal column. The syllable *Te* is placed in the *Medulla oblongata*, *Va* in the fifth *Chakra*... and so on ... *Su*... *De*... *Va*, until *Ya* is mentally chanted in the *Muladhara*.

As soon as it is comfortable, add a pause of 2-3 seconds both at the end of inhalation and of exhalation. During the pause after inhalation, the awareness makes a complete, counter-clockwise turn along the crown of the head. ["Counterclockwise" in this book is always intended as if viewing from top]. During the pause after exhalation, the awareness makes a complete, counter-clockwise turn around the *Muladhara Chakra*. The rotation above happens inside

the brain, under the cranial bone, starting from the occipital region, over *Bindu*, and coming back to it; the head accompanies this inner movement with an almost imperceptible rotating movement (tilting back slightly, then to the right, the front, the left, and finally to the back). The rotation of the awareness around *Muladhara* does not require physical movement.

During inhalation, the muscles at the base of the spinal column can be slightly contracted. This contraction is maintained not only to the end of the inhalation but also throughout the ensuing pause; then it is released and the exhalation begins. (This detail should be introduced gradually so it does not disturb the general harmony.)

The timing of one *First Omkar Kriya* breath depends on the individual: usually it is approximately 20-30 seconds.

Remark

You have probably read that in a deep *Pranayama*, the energy crosses the *Chakras* just like the thread of a necklace passes through the pearls. Do not force the visualization of a similar hypothetical event because this does not happen. Actually, the "thread" of energy envelops each "pearl". The counter clockwise rotation of awareness around the crown shrinks while coming down, just like a vortex, winding around the *Medulla oblongata*. When exhalation begins and you mentally chant *Teeeee*, you can use the starting instants of exhalation to intensify the psychic pressure around the *Medulla oblongata*. This internal action is extended in a natural way to the other *Chakras*. The path of descent is a "helix" that surrounds and creates pressure around each *Chakra*. Go slowly and do not be in a hurry and let the process proceed at its own pace.

Second part: beyond breath

The breath flows soundless and, from a certain moment onwards, takes the "inward route." The practice produces a wonderful state of calmness and at a certain point, the breath is "sucked in" and dissolved. From that moment onwards, all the physical details are only hinted at and may even disappear. The speed of each repetition of *Omkar Pranayama* slows down. Moving from one *Chakra* to the next, a *kriyaban* begins to notice the change of the light vibration in the region between the eyebrows. Each *Chakra* is felt clearly as a concentration of calm energy, while your awareness is effortlessly stable in the point between the eyebrows: this is the moment when the *Omkar reality* is revealed. Without this revelation, the practice of *Omkar Kriya* is deprived of its own essence. Being absorbed in listening to astral sound creates inner bliss, contact with our true nature, putting aside – at least momentarily – our Egoic consciousness.

Optional utilization of the syllables of the Mantra during the second phase

In the final part of *Omkar Pranayama*, when the breathing process goes along

normally at its own rhythm, it is possible to deepen the concentration in each *Chakra* by utilizing the related syllable, repeated many times.

In *Muladhara* repeat *Om, Om, Om, Om, Om...* a minimum of 36 times. (Do not use *Mala* to count – remain immobile.) The speed at which you chant the syllables is about two per second. Visualize that *Chakra* as a horizontal disk, having a diameter of approximately one inch. Visualize these syllables moving on the surface of the disk in counterclockwise direction, near the circumference. After the first round, another comes, inside the previous and so on ... until you ideally reach the center of the disk.

Then focus on the second *Chakra* where you will do exactly the same action, utilizing the second syllable of the *Mantra*, namely: *Na, Na, Na, Na, Na...* about 36 times.

Then focus on the third, repeating *Mo, Mo, Mo, Mo, Mo....* about 36 times. Then focus on the fourth, repeating *Bha, Bha, Bha, Bha, Bha ...* then on the fifth (*Ga, Ga, Ga, Ga, Ga*), then on *Bindu* (*Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba*). When you rotate the awareness many times on the crown you will repeat *Tee, Tee, Tee, Tee, Tee ...* The "*absorption state*" is very strong indeed.

Then you will focus on the fifth *Chakra* utilizing *Va, Va, Va*

Going up this way from *Muladhara* to *Bindu* and coming down repeating the same procedure is one round: the time required is approximately 4-6 minutes. Repeat 3-4 times and then be lost in the meditative state.

[IV.2] *Omkar Kriya – Internalization of the practice of Thokar*

After having completed a congruous number of rotations of *Thokar* (it can be the basic form of *Thokar* or the advanced form of it) do not interrupt this procedure but make it subtle. First of all breathe freely. Then visualize the fourth *Chakra* *Anahata* as a horizontal disk. On its surface try to perceive an inner movement sensation as if the head movements (that you are performing with more lightness and softness) were projected on its surface. (see Figure 5)

While the head is moving left, perceive in the heart *Chakra* an inner light movement to the left: think the syllable *Tee*. When the head moves right, perceive a movement rightward: think the syllable *Va*. When the head reaches the chest, perceive that this inner movement reaches the center of the ideal coin: the center of the *Anahata Chakra*. Think the syllable *Su*. Repeat some more times.

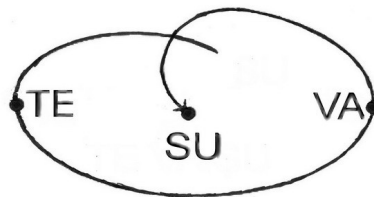


Figure 5. Perception in the heart Chakra

In comparison with the movements of *Thokar*, the dynamic of the head movements is greatly diminished. Then stop any movement (the breath is always free.) Your attention is captured by a warm radiation of energy that emanates from the fourth *Chakra*. In time, it is destined to become more and more marked.

Repeat the practice in the third *Chakra*: this is not difficult, especially if you are familiar with the complete form of *Thokar*. While part of your awareness remains in the head, transfer the repetitions of *Te*, *Va*, *Su* in the third *Chakra*. Think "*Te*" when you move to the left of its center, "*Va*" when you move to the right, "*Su*" when there is a soft tap in its center. Repeat three times.

Repeat the practice in the second, then in the first, in the second, third and fourth *Chakra*.

You realize how easy it is to have this perception in the fifth *Chakra* too, although we have never practiced *Thokar* specifically directed toward that *Chakra*. The movements of the head are extremely subtle now, practically imperceptible to an observer placed a couple of meters away.

You can have this perception in the head also, not inside *Ajna* but around it. In a very relaxed mood, start rotating the head making a short radius movement! Considering the *fontanelle* as a point, the rotation of the head now draws a circle of no more than one inch of diameter. The movement of the head may be accompanied by a light oscillatory movement of the torso. Think *Te* in the left lobe of the brain, *Va* in the right lobe and *Su* in the frontal part of the head. While you think *Su*, you can have a small (almost invisible from the physical point of view) jolt – you are lightly tapping on the door of *Kutastha*. Repeat some more times.

It is clear how you complete the first round of the technique: the perception is recreated in the fifth, the fourth, the third, the second, the first *Chakra*. You can of course repeat the whole round a couple of times.

Make more subtle movements until you reach perfect immobility. Direct mental pressure toward the nucleus of each *Chakra*. At the end, the center of your awareness naturally establishes itself in the comforting light of the sixth *Chakra*. In this immobility there is one treasure to enjoy.

Alternative

The mental repetition of *Te*, *Va*, *Su* coupled with a sensation of internal movement can end in the heart *Chakra*. You can stay there a longer period of time. A burning aspiration towards the Divine will be born from this. Among the debris of past illusions, such experience will open the doors of your spiritual realization.

After the Omkar sound ceases to exist, the Effulgent Form appears. Nothing exists except the Sun of the Soul. I, Shama Churn, am that Sun.

(Lahiri Mahasaya)

[IV.3] *Gayatri Kriya*

(Some Kriya teachers call this technique Fourth Kriya, others consider it a variation of Yoni Mudra)

This technique has the same effect as *Yoni Mudra* but you can practice it for longer times, thus its effects are stronger. Since it raises the awareness into *Kutastha*, it has a power of internalization which is perceived easily, without a shadow of a doubt. The structure of this technique is well known in India and is considered the subtlest way of using the *Gayatri Mantra*. Some booklets contain minor variations and additional rituals. The *Gayatri Mantra* is considered to be a supreme vehicle for gaining spiritual enlightenment. Its purest form is *Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargho Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat*. (Oh, great Spiritual Light who has created the Universe, we meditate upon Your glory. You are the embodiment of Knowledge. You are the remover of all Ignorance. May You enlighten our Intellect and awaken our Intuition.)

This *Mantra* is prefaced with either a short or a long invocation. The short invocation is: *Om Bhur, Om Bhuvah, Om Swaha*. The terms *Bhur, Bhuvah, Swaha* are invocations to honor the three planes of existence (physical, astral, and causal respectively) and to address their presiding deities. The long invocation is: *Om Bhur, Om Bhuvah, Om Swaha, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam*. This invocation is more complete since it recognizes that there are more planes of existence: the seven *Lokas*. *Mahah* is the mental world, the plane of spiritual balance; *Janah* is the world of pure knowledge; *Tapah* is the world of intuition; *Satyam* is the world of Absolute, Ultimate Truth. We can be satisfied with the explanation that these sounds are used to activate the *Chakras* and connect them to the seven spiritual realms of existence. In our procedure, we use only the opening long invocation in its complete form and not all the parts of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Kriya* tradition we are following here links *Manipura* with *Om Mahah* and *Anahata* with *Om Swaha*. The reason is that the world of thinking, evoked by *Om Mahah*, is more appropriate to the nature of the third *Chakra*, while the causal world of pure ideas, evoked by *Om Swaha*, is related to *Anahata Chakra*.

Practical instruction

Practice this technique at the end of your *Kriya* routine.

Practice the following actions for each *Chakra* (in the order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, *Medulla oblongata*):

1. Contract the muscles near the physical location of the *Chakra*. The contraction can be repeated two-three times.)
2. Through a deep inhalation (not necessarily as long as in *Kriya Pranayama*) visualize the *Chakra* coming up into the point between the eyebrows, where you perceive it as a full moon. You don't come up "touching" the other *Chakras*. Now they don't exist. Your awareness is fully inside a *Chakra* and nothing exists but the *Chakra* itself and *Kutastha*.

3. Hold the breath and focus on the "inner space" between the eyebrows. This comes out easily with *Kechari Mudra*.⁷ On the screen between the eyebrows, a particular color experience happens – this color is different for each *Chakra*.
4. Mentally chant at least three times the specific *Mantra* for the *Chakra*.
5. Finally, through a long exhalation, ideally lower the *Chakra* from the point between the eyebrows to its proper location in the spine.

The *Mantras* to be used are:

Om Bhur for *Muladhara*
Om Bhuvah for *Swadhisthana*
Om Mahah for *Manipura*
Om Swaha for *Anahata*
Om Janah for *Vishuddha*
Om Tapah for *Medulla oblongata*
Om Satyam will be chanted in *Kutastha*

Let us see how to contract the muscles near the physical location of the *Chakra*.

First *Chakra Muladhara*: practice *Mula Bandha* until the abdomen and spine vibrate. Relax.

Many find the following technical detail very useful: before lifting a *Chakra*, let the inhalation ideally start from its "frontal" component (perineum), come towards its location in the spine and then come up to the point between the eyebrows. (This can be usefully applied to the next *Chakras*: the pubic area is the "frontal" part of *Swadhisthana Chakra*; *Manipura* is linked with the navel; the central region of the sternum is the "frontal" part of *Anahata*; *Vishuddha* is linked with the upper front part of the throat.)

Second *Chakra Swadhisthana*: practice *Vairoli Mudra* (contract and relax both the urethral sphincter and the muscles of the back near the sacral center.)

Third *Chakra Manipura*: quickly contract and relax the navel, the abdominal muscles and the lumbar area of the spine.

Fourth *Chakra Anahata*: bring the shoulder blades together and concentrate on the spine near the heart. Relax.

Fifth *Chakra Vishuddha*: move your head quickly from side to side (without turning your face) a couple of times, perceiving a grinding sound in the cervical vertebrae. This is only to localize the cervical center. Now contract the muscles of the back of the neck near the cervical vertebrae and relax.

⁷ "Ke-chari" is literally translated as "the state of those who fly in the sky, in the ether". A particular "space" is created in the region between the tip of the tongue and the point between the eyebrows and is perceived as a "vacuum", although it is not a physical void. By merging into this empty space, it is easier for a *kriyaban* to perceive the rhythms of each *Chakra* and distinguish them one from another.

Medulla oblongata: raise the chin, tense the muscles near the *Medulla oblongata* (under the occipital region), clench the teeth, and see the light at the point between the eyebrows. Relax.

Add a particularly intense concentration at the point between the eyebrows. Hold your breath; raise your eyebrows, become aware of the light. Repeat *Om Satyam*.

Now complete the "round" by lifting *Chakras* 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, always using the contraction, the chanting of the *Mantra*, being aware of any particular light experience in *Kutastha*. If possible repeat the procedure 6 to 12 rounds.

Remark

Those who persevere (refusing the scruple that this procedure doesn't come out with any effects) and give this technique a fair trial will experience a definite transformation of their state of consciousness. In whatever way you look at it, the contribution of this technique in removing the last internal obstacles blocking our efforts to enter *Sushumna* is exceptional.

If the practice seems difficult, you must improve your preparation. Every day deepen your *mental Pranayama*. Move your concentration up and down the spine, intensifying the mental pressure around each *Chakra*. After listening to the internal sounds, you will come to perceive more and more Light in the *Kutastha* and in the higher part of the brain and remain merged in it for a long time.

During the practice of the above described procedure, *Prana* always remains in the region of the middle part of your head where the sixth *Chakra Ajna* has its seat. Now, if you notice that the barycenter (center of mass) of your awareness (therefore of your *Prana*) is coming down and is gravitating toward the areas controlled by the fifth or the fourth *Chakra*, use the previously described exercise to achieve the *Antar Kevala Kumbhaka* state. Make use of it as much as necessary.

Deepening of the practice

The light that you perceive in the heart *Chakra* has its proper origin and seat in *Kutastha* and contains the particular vibration and light frequency of each *Chakra*. The procedure we have described gives the power to familiarize with these frequencies up to the realization that all the universe exists in *Kutastha*.

In time it will be possible for you to mentally repeat "*Om Bhur*" 36 times holding your breath. This gives you the power to tune with earth-*Tattwa* experiencing the peculiar "vibration" of the *Muladhara Chakra*.

At the same time, by repeating the *Mantra* "*Om Bhuvah*" 36 times it will be possible to tune with water-*Tattwa* having its seat in the second *Chakra*.... then comes the turn of the fire-*Tattwa*...

Familiarity with the breathless state gives you the ability to stop at each *Chakra* (like a bee on a flower), bathing for a precise time in the *Tattwa* linked

with that *Chakra*. The ideal time is what is required to do 36 repetitions of the related *Mantra*. Stay with the number 36 to resist the tendency to lose yourself in a state of bliss arising from each *Chakra*. The *Tattwa* related to a *Chakra* tends to entrap one's attention, resulting in an indefinite pause on a *Chakra* with nothing being accomplished. The 36 repetitions of the *Mantra* will help you to have full experience of each *Tattwa* but, at the same time, go beyond it. The meaning of the *Gayatri Kriya* is exactly this: tuning in with each *Tattwa*, one after the other, up and down along the spine until, as *Kriya* literature affirms, "The last shell of illusion is broken!"

[V] Alternative procedures cooperating with the second and third part

[V.1] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Amantrak)*

[V.2] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Samantrak)*

[V.3] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Thokar)*

(It is a set of three techniques, commonly called Second, Third and Fourth Kriya by those schools that do not teach the basic form of Thokar)

Kriya tradition requires that this technique be taught in three separate sessions: between the first and the second and between the second and the third usually one year should elapse. It is therefore unthinkable to practice the last stage (*Thokar Tribhangamurari* proper) as an experiment and immediately expect to appreciate its potentiality. On the contrary, persisting stubbornly with such an attitude is an almost certain guarantee of permanently failing to understand and taste the richness and beauty of the *Tribhangamurari*-based procedures. [This discussion is resumed at the end of Chapter 9.]

In the three techniques of the *Tribhangamurari Macro* there is no formal instruction about the use of the breath. Each technique is supposed to be practiced with a very calm breath which may disappear in certain moments of internalization toward which the technique naturally leads.

[V.1] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Amantrak)*

Practice the following technique with your tongue in *Kechari Mudra*, after the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and of *Navi Kriya*. At the end of this practice, remain with the awareness centered in the light of *Kutastha*.

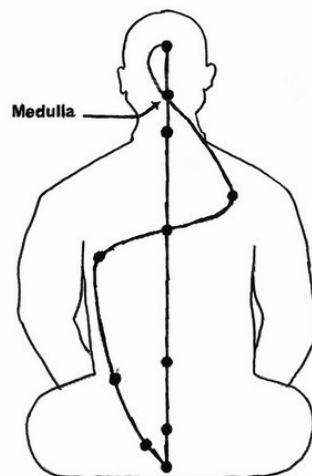


Figure 6. Internal movement Tribhangamurari

Forget completely your breath, let it follow its natural rhythm. Very slowly raise *Prana* and awareness through the spinal channel, from *Muladhara* to *Bindu* – half a minute is required. Do not pause in any of the *Chakras*. Now let *Prana* and awareness come slowly downwards along the *Tribhangamurari* path and reach *Muladhara*. Another half minute is required.

The *Tribhangamurari* path begins in *Bindu*, bends to the left, descends into the seat of *Medulla oblongata*, crosses it, and continues toward the right side of the body. Once a particular point in the back (5-6 centimeters above the right nipple) is reached, it reverses direction cutting the heart knot. After reaching a point in the back that is 5-6 centimeters under the left nipple, it changes its direction again and points toward the seat of the last knot in the coccyx region. (See figure 6)

One round of *Amantrak* (*Amantrak* means "without the use of a *Mantra*") lasts one minute. If you realize it is shorter, let us say 45/50 seconds, it does not mean the procedure was executed too quickly. However, resolve to reach the exact timing.

For two weeks, repeat this technique 25 times, once a day. Then for another two weeks repeat it 50 times once a day; then for another two weeks 75 times and so on up to 200 times each day for two weeks. Only then can you begin the regular practice of the second technique: *Samantrak*.

Remark

Tribhangamurari is the best symbol of *Kriya Yoga* because apart from showing the cutting of the three knots, it is also one symbol of *Sri Krishna*. The shape of *Krishna*, as depicted in the iconography, is a form in which you can easily individuate three curves (head, spine, bent leg.) A sentence attributed to Lahiri Mahasaya: "To make this body *Tribhangamurari* (Krishna-like), three knots have to be crossed."

Through this procedure, *Kundalini* is invited to rise through *Sushumna*. In the beginning, only a minimum of *Prana* is able to enter the *Sushumna* and move upward – this is due to mental restlessness. But sooner or later, the *Kundalini* energy will reach the head. The technique fosters this moment because during each round you cross three main knots (*Grantis*): tongue/*Medulla oblongata*, heart, and coccyx. This happens by coming down from head to *Muladhara* following the three-curved path *Tribhangamurari* (Tri-bhanga-murari = three-bend-form.)

[V.2] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Samantrak)*

Practice the following technique with your tongue in *Kechari Mudra*, after the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and of *Navi Kriya*. At the end of this practice, remain with the awareness centered in the light of *Kutastha*.

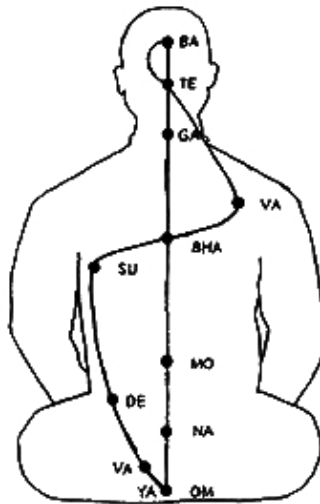


Figure 7. Placing the 12 syllables along the Tribhangamurari path

Completely forget about your breath and allow it to follow its natural rhythm. Very slowly, raise *Prana* and awareness through the spinal channel, from *Muladhara* to *Bindu* – this requires half a minute. The perception of the current is intensified by mentally chanting the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*. *Om*, *Na*, *Mo*, *Bha*, *Ga*, are vibrated into the first five *Chakras* and *Ba* in *Bindu*.

Now let *Prana* and awareness come slowly downwards along the *Tribhangamurari* path and reach *Muladhara*. Half a minute is required. The perception of the *Tribhangamurari* current is intensified by mentally chanting the remaining syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*. *Teeee* is chanted in *Medulla oblongata* but you are able to perceive how the reverberation of this vibration touches the point between the eyebrows – thus you also will feel *Teeee* in *Kutastha*.

The syllables *Va*, *Su*, *De*, *Va* are put in the four new centers outside the spine; *Ya* is vibrated in *Muladhara*. These four new centers are four "vortexes" inside the main flow of the current – they are not a new set of *Chakras*. Each syllable when vibrated is like a mental *Thokar* (hit): since the technique is performed slowly, there is plenty of time to make these tappings very effective.

We have now described one round of *Samantrak*, which lasts one minute. If you realize it is shorter, let us say 45/50 seconds, again, it does not mean the procedure has been done too quickly. However, make a resolution to reach the exact timing.

For two weeks repeat this technique 25 times, once a day. Then for another two weeks repeat it 50 times, once a day; then for another two weeks 75 times and so on up to 200 times each day for two weeks. Only then can you begin the regular practice of the third technique: *Thokar-Tribhangamurari*.

[V.3] *Macro movement Tribhangamurari (Thokar)*

Practice the following technique with your tongue in *Kechari Mudra* after the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and of *Navi Kriya*. At the end of this practice, resume for some rounds (6-12) the practice of *Omkar Pranayama* and then remain with the awareness centered in the light of *Kutastha*.

Forget the breath. The hands (with interlocked fingers) are placed on the navel area so as to push the abdominal region upward, thus creating a physical pressure on the first three *Chakras*. Starting with the chin on the chest, move the energy and awareness very slowly along the spinal column from *Muladhara* to *Bindu*. Your chin comes slowly up following the inner movement. "Touch" internally each *Chakra* with the syllables of the *Mantra* (*Om* is placed in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second ...). When energy and awareness are at *Bindu*, the chin is parallel to the ground.

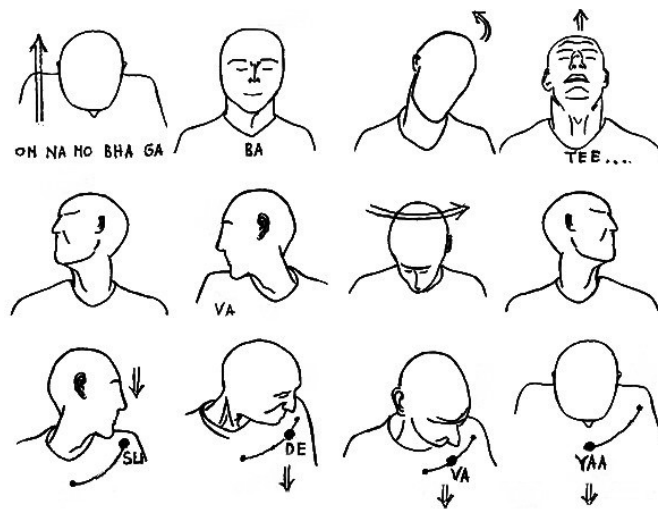


Figure 8. Thokar-Tribhangamurari

Now the descent of the energy begins. The movement of the head follows millimeter by millimeter its downward energetic flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path, from *Bindu* to *Muladhara*, crossing the three knots and touching the four new centers outside the spine. All this happens in a fluid way and within 30 seconds or less. The following description of the movements of the head may seem complicated at first but with a minimum of patience, the right movement of the head will be learned: you need only to understand that it is

conceived as a logical and effective way of intensifying a particular snakelike downward flow of the energy. Let us now begin to describe the movements of the head.

Without turning the face, bend your head sideways a couple of centimeters to the left. Raise the chin as much as possible (contract the neck's back muscles) and return to the middle. Realize how this simple movement accompanies perfectly the descent of energy from *Bindu* to the *Medulla oblongata* along the first curve of the *Tribhangamurari* path. Remain only an instant in this position, with the chin raised and vibrate the syllable *Teeee* in the *Medulla oblongata*. Furthermore, as you learned in *Samantrak*, perceive also the reverberation of this vibration at the point between the eyebrows.

Then, from this position, slowly turn the face to the right and as far as possible. Only the face moves, not the torso. During this SLOW movement (do not be influenced by the dynamics of the technique of *Thokar*), the inner flow of energy moves from the *Medulla oblongata* to the eighth center.

Here the first of five psycho-physical blows happens: the chin touches the right shoulder for an instant and the syllable *Va* is vibrated in the eighth center. The shoulder also makes a small upward motion to make contact with the chin easier. But be careful: if you feel you're forcing it, STOP! Those who are not able to have this contact with the right shoulder, should content themselves with coming as close to the shoulder as possible and stimulate the eighth center with sheer mental strength.

Then the face turns very slowly to the left, accompanying, millimeter by millimeter, the internal flow of energy from the eighth to the ninth center, and crossing the fourth *Chakra*. If possible, place the chin over the left shoulder. The second blow takes place when the syllable *Su* is vibrated in the ninth center and the chin for an instant touches the left shoulder, which makes a small motion upward to make contact with the chin easier.

Two more blows happen when the syllables *De* and *Va* are put in the tenth and eleventh centers. The procedure is the following: The chin slowly moves toward the middle of the chest while grazing the left collarbone. During this movement, two light blows are given to the left collarbone in intermediate positions. (I think Figure 8 can help you understand what I mean for "intermediate positions".) The blows are given of course in the moment in which the syllables of the *Mantra* are vibrated. Finally, a last blow is given on the chest (central position) when the syllable *Ya* is vibrated in *Muladhara*.

The essence of this particular form of "*Thokar*" consists not only in the five strokes but mainly in a constant intensification of the mental pressure along the whole circuit. Considering the action of squeezing an almost empty tube of toothpaste to get the last bit out gives you a good idea of what happens during this procedure. When the movements of the head are slow and enriched by a great strength of concentration and will, there is no limit to the increase of the internal energetic flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path.

As in the previous technique, if you take 45/50 seconds to do one round, it's OK. However, your goal is to reach the ideal speed of 60 seconds.

Repeat the procedure 36 times. After completing the programmed number of rounds, calm the system with a minimal practice of *Samantrak*, then relax by practicing a simple *mental Pranayama*.

The supervision of an expert helps to avoid any problems – I am referring to stress and pain in the cervical vertebrae and in the muscles of the neck. Abrupt movements should be avoided; instead use a deep intensity of mental concentration. For the first couple of weeks do not practice every day but every two or three days.

As soon as possible, begin the incremental routine of this procedure by practicing: 36x2, 36x3,..... 36x35, 36x36. Be careful to allow always one week to elapse between one stage and the next.

To those who have the time and good will to complete it, I recommend this routine as a very important feat. A minimum of 8-10 months is required to complete it. Then you can start the practice of the *Tribhangamurari Micro*.

[VI] Alternative procedures cooperating with the fourth part

[VI.1] *Micro movement Tribhangamurari (Amantrak)*

[VI.2] *Micro movement Tribhangamurari (Samantrak)*

(Commonly called Fifth, Sixth Kriya by those school that teach Tribhangamurari Thokar)

[VI.1] *Micro movement Tribhangamurari (Amantrak)*

Practice the following technique with your tongue in *Kechari Mudra*, after the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and *Navi Kriya* and after a minimum of 12 rounds of *Thokar-Tribhangamurari*.

The definitive stability of *Kundalini* in *Ajna Chakra* is achieved through the *Tribhangamurari Micro*. This technique implies the experience of the movement *Tribhangamurari* in small dimensions inside each *Chakra*, *Bindu*, *Medulla oblongata*, in the four centers outside the spine located along the *Tribhangamurari* flow and again in *Muladhara*.

Through a short inhalation, raise the *Prana* in the *Muladhara Chakra* into the point between the eyebrows. When the presence of the energy is clearly felt in the point between your eyebrows, stop the breath and look "down" at the *Muladhara Chakra*. Visualize it as a horizontal disk, having a diameter of approximately one inch. Now, perceive on that disk the *Tribhangamurari* movement in reduced dimensions.

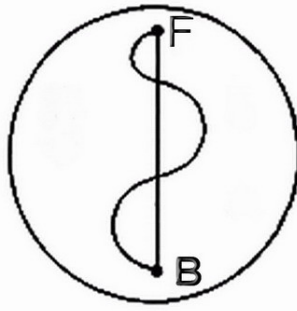


Figure 9. Tribhangamurari micro-movement inside a Chakra

Refer to Figure 9; start from point B (back part of the *Chakra*) and go straight to F (frontal part of the *Chakra*); then return from F to B along the snakelike path. It does not matter whether the time it takes is short or long. Exert a moderate but continuous pressure on the disk as if you had a pen and were drawing a clear continuous mark. Sooner or later you will perceive something. A tendency may come to make a very faint movement of the spinal column (forward, left, right, left, back to starting position). This movement should be almost invisible to an observer. Repeat two more times. Your breath is held effortlessly; the *Prana* remains totally in *Ajna Chakra*. After three perceptions of the complete movement (a complete movement is a straight movement from B to F, followed by the snakelike movement from F to B) you can relax and let *Prana* come down. A subtle exhalation happens but you may not be aware of it. Move to the second *Chakra* and repeat the same procedure.

Repeat the same procedure for *Chakras* 3, 4, 5, then for *Bindu*, then for *Medulla oblongata*, then for the four centers outside the spine, and finally for *Muladhara*. This is round 1: practice 12 rounds. At the end of 12 rounds, remain with the awareness centered in the light of *Kutastha*. Be faithful to this practice for at least six months before starting to familiarize yourself with the following procedure.

[VI.2] *Micro movement Tribhangamurari (Samantrak)*

The technique is the same but the mental pressure is increased through the repetitions of the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*. There won't be any further stage with movements of the head as we have done with *Thokar Tribhangamurari*. In this last stage remain immobile with no movement at all of the spinal column or of the head. Here all the power of pressure has to be obtained with the sheer repetition of the syllables of the *Mantra*.

Practice *Kechari Mudra*. Through a short inhalation, raise the *Prana* contained in the *Muladhara Chakra* into the point between the eyebrows. When the presence of the energy is clearly felt in the point between the eyebrows, forget the breath and look "down" at the *Muladhara Chakra* and mentally utter the syllables "Om-Na-Mo-Bha-Ga-Ba-Te-Va-Su-De-Va-Ya". Do this *Japa* without hurry.

The micro-movement *Tribhangamurari* will be perceived as in the previous first part but now the mental repetition of the syllables will add a greater "pressure" to it. The syllables are like mini "thrusts" or "pulsations". The duration of a round is determined by the speed of the chanting of the *Mantra*. For many people, the chanting of the *Mantra* and consequently, the micro-movement lasts about 10-12 seconds. Nevertheless, remember that Lahiri Mahasaya's recommendation was "Don't be in a hurry!" Observe the difference between going slowly and with speed. If you go slowly, you will perceive a tremendous power.

Repeat the *Vasudeva Mantra* three times. *Prana* remains totally in the head. After three perceptions of the micro-movement, repeat the same procedure in *Chakras* 2, 3, 4, 5, then in *Bindu*, then in *Medulla oblongata*, then in the four centers outside the spine, and finally in *Muladhara*. This is one round: practice 12 rounds. At the end of this practice, remain with the awareness centered in the light of *Kutastha*.

Remark

This procedure implies the experience of a peculiar sensation of movement within the perfect stillness of each *Chakra*. This experience is the surest way toward the annihilation of the Ego.

This internal movement embodies the deeper aspect of the *Omkar* reality. Perceiving it means to annihilate any form of duality present in the *Chakras* and therefore, in your awareness. This technique leads you out of time and space. Only few *Kriya* schools have disclosed the nature of this micro-movement and revealed its importance. Unfortunately, many people seek frantically impossible surrogates for it!

INTRODUCTION TO SOME INTERESTING VARIATIONS OF THE TECHNIQUES

Here we shall discuss the most interesting and powerful variations of *Kriya Yoga*. The following exposition is essentially devote to the autodidact who wants to empower a certain technique beyond the usual limits to whom generally those who practice *Kriya* are used. This is possible by experimenting with different variations until you intuitively understand the core, the gist of a procedure.

The variations that I am going to discuss have different origin. Some have a good connection to Lahiri Mahasaya's original legacy. Others have the perfume of the *Radhasoami Sant Mat*, others the power of *Kundalini Yoga*; some betray the influx of the *Internal Alchemy – Nei dan*, the central practice of Taoism.

Global outline

Four phases of the Kriya process	First Kriya	Higher Kriyas
PHASE 1 Unfastening the knot of the tongue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Talabya Kriya considered not only a preparation to Kechari but a process important in itself // Kechari Mudra practiced apart from other procedures or combined with the practice of Kriya Pranayama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Omkar Kriya
PHASE 2 Unfastening the knot of the heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kriya Pranayama ■ Listening of internal sounds both during and after the practice of Kriya Pranayama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Basic and advanced form of Thokar
PHASE 3 Unfastening the knot of Muladhara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kriya Pranayama ■ Navi Kriya, Maha Mudra ■ Particular procedures, typical of Kundalini Yoga 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete form of Thokar ■ Tribhangamurari macro
PHASE 4 Guiding consciousness to rise from Muladhara to Kutastha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kriya Pranayama with short breath, mental Pranayama ■ Yoni Mudra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Omkar Kriya ■ Tribhangamurari micro

FIRST PART: VARIATION OF THE FIRST KRIYA TECHNIQUES

1. Talabya Kriya

The technique of *Talabya Kriya* can be enriched by massaging both the muscles of the tongue and the frenulum with one's own fingers.

2. Om Japa in the Chakras

[2.1] Some schools teach to chant (loudly or mentally) *Vam* or *Bam* or *Hrom* at the place of *Om*. Especially *Hrom* (a sustained Hrooooooom) turns out very effective in flooding with euphoria those who practice.

[2.2] You can accompany the chant (only if it is done mentally) with one or more breaths. Focus your awareness on the *Muladhara Chakra* and breath deeply visualizing the air coming in and out from that point. Repeat for each *Chakra*; after reaching *Bindu*, go back to *Muladhara*. Repeat the circuit 6-12 times.

At first it will not be a single point of which you become aware, but more like an area. In time, the sensations will become more localized.

3. Kriya Pranayama

[3.1] *Long exhalation and Kumbhaka*

Many *kriyabans* find the following instruction very comforting (this detail can be applied to any *Kriya Pranayama* variation). The ratio 2:3 for inhalation and exhalation is considered as more natural than 1:1. (For instance: inhalation lasts 12 seconds, exhalation lasts 18 seconds.) In time you can add *Kumbhaka* after inhalation. Starting with 4 seconds you can hold your breath for a time equal to inhalation. (For instance: 12 seconds inhale, 12 seconds hold, 18 seconds exhale.)

[3.2] *Kriya Pranayama with Aswini Mudra*

It is a wise choice to practice *Aswini Mudra* during *Kriya Pranayama*.

Aswini Mudra means contracting repeatedly the muscles at the base of the spine with the rhythm of about two contractions per second. While learning the technique, a *yogi* contracts the buttock muscles, perineum or even the entire pelvic region also; with time, the contraction involves only the sphincter muscles.

During inhalation and exhalation of the first 12 *Kriya* breaths, *Aswini Mudra* should be strong; subsequently, it should decrease in intensity and become like a slight internal contraction of the inferior part of the spine (it is clear that the spine cannot be contracted: this is just a sensation.)

The continuous practice of *Aswini Mudra* during *Kriya Pranayama* creates the condition for *Kundalini* awakening. It gently pushes the *Apana* current upward to the navel region where it meets *Prana*. *Kundalini* awakens when *Prana* and *Apana* unite and there is perfect immobility of the body.

If this procedure appears annoying and disturbing, it is essential to be unshakeable and go ahead with it. At a certain point, by going on impassively, one has the certainty that something positive is happening. One perceives a

pleasurable shiver in the spine. The day after this practice, a diffuse joy during all the day is perceived. Even the most simple *Kriya* routine fills one with joy.

[3.3] *Kriya Pranayama with Mula Bandha*

This practice is not beautiful as the previous one, the only purpose for which I describe it here is completeness. *Mula Bandha* means contracting the perineum muscles, while a mental pressure is exerted on the lower part of the spine (we have only one long contraction and not a series of contraction and release as we have in *Aswini Mudra*.) We practice this *Mula Bandha* during the pause after inhalation. The goal is to create the perception of *Kutastha*.

During the last instants of inhalation of a *Kriya* breath, visualize the current reaching *Bindu*, then "rotating" left, coming down a little bit and entering the *Medulla oblongata*. It is in this moment that *Mula Bandha* is practiced intensely, the breath is held and the eyebrows are raised. The sensation is that the energy is pushed from *Medulla oblongata* into *Kutastha*. A sensation of internal light spreads from *Kutastha* to the upper part of the brain.

Then exhalation begins, the tension of *Mula Bandha* is released and the energy goes down to *Muladhara*. *Kechari Mudra* cooperates with the process: during *Mula Bandha*, the tongue (inside the nasal pharynx) is pushed upward and forward.

[3.4] *Kriya Pranayama with tight helix*

What I am going to describe, comes out very easily to those who have practiced *Kriya Pranayama* with *Aswini Mudra*.

In this variation we forget the existence of the *Chakras* and concentrate upon the spine chord only. The spinal path of the energy is perceived as an helix. In a nutshell, starting from the base of the spine, the energy comes up rotating counterclockwise along the spinal channel. Then the energy comes down along the same path, hence rotating clockwise. *Kriyabans* experience a strong sensation of physical immobility and perceive their spine as a steel bar.

[3.5] *A subtle form of Thokar inside Kriya Pranayama*

What we are going to describe concerns only the exhalation of *Kriya Pranayama*.

During exhalation, realize it is not difficult to give a particular "jerk" at each *Chakra* location. Each *kriyaban* has such power and you can increase it obtaining a more striking effect than what is obtained by the procedure of *Omkar Pranayama*.

It is impossible to tell if, when you give the jerk, there is a short pause of the breath or, quite the reverse, there is a short emission of breath. What you feel is an intensity of awareness and energy stimulating one *Chakra* at a time. The final jerk in *Muladhara* at the end of exhalation creates an intense outburst of joy.

While progressing in this practice, one can experience a really *internalized* exhalation. This happens when you give a jerk to *Medulla*

oblongata and the physical breath disappears entirely. *Internalized* exhalation is not accompanied by the exit of the air through the nose. This is one of the mysterious facts of *Kriya*, difficult to understand with the sheer logic.

[3.6] *Kriya Pranayama with a particular circuit inside and outside the spine*

Inhale. Visualize the breath like a threadlike current coming up inside the spine, piercing each *Chakra* from *Muladhara* to *Medulla oblongata*, reaching, at the end of the inhalation, the point between the eyebrows. Pause there for a couple of seconds.

The path linked with exhalation is longer than the one linked with inhalation. In detail: during exhalation the current moves up vertically inside the space between the frontal part of the brain and the frontal bone; then bends backwards moving over the brain (and under the cranial bones), then bends downwards, pierces *Bindu* and reaches *Medulla oblongata*. Then the current comes down along the back of the spinal column: while descending externally to the spine, it touches each *Chakra* lightly from the back. When it reaches *Muladhara*, exhalation is completed.

In time you will add to the practice the mental chant of *Om* in each one of the centers involved (*Chakra* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, *Medulla oblongata* while coming up and then *Bindu*, *Medulla oblongata*, *Chakra* 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 while coming down.)

4. Navi Kriya

[4.1] *Navi Kriya using breath and Kumbhaka also*

First part. Inhale through the nose. Hold the breath and intensify the concentration on the navel through the three *Bandhas* (*Mula Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha* and *Jalandhara Bandha*). In this position, with the chin tilted down, mentally chant *Om* 12 times in the navel exerting a continuous mental pressure upon it. Then exhale unleashing the *Bandhas* and raise the chin with a slight tension.

Second part. With the chin raised, inhale through the nose. While holding the breath, focus the concentration on the third *Chakra Manipura*. Mentally chant *Om* 18 times in *Manipura* exerting a form of mental pressure upon that center. Then exhale keeping the chin in the normal horizontal position. Part one & part two are one *Navi Kriya*. As usual, a *kriyaban* repeats *Navi Kriya* four times.

[4.2] *Navi Kriya coming down through four directions*

The following variation of *Navi Kriya* is the one many *kriyabans* like the best. As it happens in the basic form of *Navi Kriya*, a *kriyaban's* awareness goes slowly up along the spinal column placing the syllable *Om* in the six *Chakras*. Then the chin is brought down toward the throat cavity.

Now, a short inhalation (two seconds maximum, without concentrating on the *Chakras*) is followed by a very long exhalation, during which, the energy is felt descending from the frontal part of the brain, along a path outside the body

to the navel, reaching through it the *Dantian* region. [Let us remind that the *Dantian* can be visualized as a ball about one and one-half inches in diameter. Its center is located about two and one-half inches below the belly button and about one and one-half inches inside.]

During this long exhalation, *Om* is chanted mentally, rapidly, 10-15 times, accompanying the descent of energy throughout the path. After a short pause in the *Dantian*, the head resumes its normal position.

Now each detail is repeated but the descent of the energy happens through a different path. A short inhalation draws the energy into the head again. The head bends but not in the front: it bends toward the *left* shoulder, without turning the face. A long exhalation (with the same chanting of *Om, Om, Om...*) accompanies the downward movement of energy which starts from the brain's left side and moves along a path outside the body at its left side (as if shoulder or arm would not exist). The energy comes down to the waist, cross it and moves toward the *Dantian*.

The head moves back into its normal position. After a short inhalation, the head bends backwards. A long expiration (with the same chanting of *Om, Om, Om...*) accompanies the downward movement of energy which starts from the occipital region and moves (outside the body) down to the waist where it bends, pierces the third *Chakra Manipura* and moves toward the inside of the abdominal region (*Dantian*). The procedure is repeated likewise on the *right* side.

This last exhalation concludes a mini cycle of four exhalations accompanied by four descents of energy towards the waist and, crossing it, towards the region of low abdomen. This mini cycle is repeated 9 times. In conclusion we have had $4 \times 9 = 36$ descents of energy. After these exhalations, the procedure ends with a mental chanting of *Om* in each *Chakra* from *Ajna Chakra* to *Muladhara*.

What we have described lasts 8-10 minutes and is equivalent to 4 repetitions of the basic form of *Navi Kriya*.

Remark

As the practitioner proceeds with the rotations and the effects of the technique become more and more perceptible, the movements of the head become less marked – the process internalizes. One phenomenon is remarkable: at the very moment the order to exhale has been imparted by the mind, it feels as if the lungs cannot move. Some instants later comes the awareness of something subtle descending into the body. A new kind of exhalation is enjoyed, like an internal all-pervading pressure. It brings about a peculiar feeling of well-being, harmony, and freedom. One has the impression one could remain like that forever. Logic implies that breath is coming out of the nose, yet you would swear it doesn't. This may be considered the first experience of *Pranayama with internal breath* (also called *Kriya of the cells*) that we are going to introduce in Chapter 12.

[4.3] *Chanting Om alternatively between Kutastha and navel*

All details of the basic explanation of *Navi Kriya* given in Chapter 6 up to the forward bending of the head remain unchanged.

In this variation (really very sweet and comfortable) the *Om Mantra* is mentally chanted in alternation between the point between the eyebrows and the navel (*Om* in the point between the eyebrows, *Om* in the navel, *Om* in the point between the eyebrows, *Om* in the navel... and so on).

The most useful way of doing it is to synchronize the breath with the *Om* chanting. Visualize a tiny silver cord that comes out from the point between the eyebrows bends slightly and goes down to the navel. When it comes natural to have a very short inhalation, inhale (only what is necessary), visualize the movement of air rising, through the visualized duct, from the navel to the point between the eyebrows, pause an instant there just chant *Om* mentally. When it comes natural to exhale, exhale, visualizing the movement of air going down into the navel, pause and chant *Om* mentally in the navel. By repeating this, you will markedly feel that your breath begins to subside and disappear. When this happens, go on mentally chanting the *Om Mantra* in alternation between the point between the eyebrows and the navel and moving the focus of your awareness between these two points, without ceasing being aware of the "silver cord". Carry on.

When *Om* is chanted about 75 times, bend your head backwards and repeat a similar procedure by chanting *Om* in alternation between the *Bindu* and the third *Chakra*. Visualize another tiny silver cord that connects (outside your body) the *Bindu* to the third *Chakra*. Let your breath – if there is still a trace of breath – flow freely through that cord. When *Om* is chanted about 25 times, resume the chin's normal position and chant mentally *Om* in the point between the eyebrows, *Medulla oblongata*, *Chakras* 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. This is one *Navi Kriya*. The optimum is to have 4 cycles of *Navi Kriya*.

5. Maha Mudra

[5.1] *Forward bendings*

Before the practice of *Maha Mudra* proper, sit in the half-lotus position or on the heels. Through a deep inhalation (not necessarily as long as in *Kriya Pranayama*) visualize the first *Chakra* rising into the point between the eyebrows; hold the breath, bend the body forward. The head is placed in the region between the knees (see figure 10). Use your hands freely.

The head comes near the right knee, the face is turned toward the left knee so that it is possible to perceive a pressure on the right side of the head; a sensation of space is perceived inside the left side of the brain. Then repeat the same exercise with the other side of the body, reversing the perceptions. Then the head is placed in the region between the knees again, the face turned downward. A pressure is felt on the forehead. A sensation of space is perceived inside the occipital region.

The breath is retained during the entire sequence. After these movements,

resume the starting position with the spine erect. Through a long exhalation the energy comes down from *Ajna Chakra* to *Muladhara*.

Then concentrate on the second *Chakra* and repeat the procedure (ideally raise that *Chakra*, bend the body forward, and so on). You can have five bows, one for each *Chakra*, but since you can also ideally raise *Ajna Chakra* into *Fontanelle*, you can have six bows.

In some schools, this technique is called *Guru Pranayama* because during the first bend you can mentally bow to your *Guru*; during the second bend you can mentally bow to your *Param-Guru* ... and so on *Chakra* after *Chakra* with all your lineage of *Gurus*.



Figure 10. Forward bending starting from sitting on the heels or starting from the half-lotus pose

By repeating this "*Chakra awakening procedure*" on various days, when you focus on a *Chakra*, you will perceive a feeling of movement, a swinging sensation, in it – this is a very important experience.

[5.2] *Maha Mudra after the bendings*

Now practice *Maha Mudra*. When the right leg is extended, the right hand grabs the toes of the right foot while the left hand grabs the inner side of the right foot (the arch of the foot); the face is turned left while the breath is retained. A sensation like an inner pressure is felt on the right side of the head. It contrasts with the free space sensation in the left side of the brain. Practicing the opposite position, the sensations are reversed. When both legs are extended, the pressure must be felt on the front part of the head. A sensation of space is perceived inside the occipital region. As usual, this exercise is repeated three times. While stretching forward holding your breath in the position envisaged for *Maha Mudra*, chant *Om* as you come up in each *Chakra*, and try to perceive the afore hinted oscillation in each one.

[5.3] *Maha Mudra with a movement of awareness during Kumbhaka*

Practice the first part of basic *Maha Mudra*, inhaling, holding breath and bending forward grabbing the big toe with the index fingers. As you reach for the foot, raise the eyes to gaze at the eyebrow center. Place *Om* in the point between the eyebrows, *Om* where the tongue touches the palate and *Om* in *Muladhara*. Repeat three times in sequence. Return to the upright position. Exhale down the

spinal channel, pushing the navel towards the lumbar center *Manipura*. Repeat again this particular way of mentally chanting *Om* in the symmetrical position and with both legs outstretched.

Now practice *Maha Mudra* in the following way: before stretching forward, practice one full *Kriya Pranayama* (inhalation and exhalation) and hold the breath out. Bend forward reaching for the foot. With breath out, apply the three *Bandhas* (*Mula Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha* and *Jalandhara Bandha*) and raise the eyes to gaze at the eyebrow center. Place *Om* there, *Om* in the navel and *Om* in *Muladhara*. Repeat three times. Return to the upright position, releasing the *Bandhas* and inhale raising the energy from *Muladhara*. Exhale down the spinal channel, squeezing the navel towards the lumbar center *Manipura*. Repeat again in the symmetrical position and with both legs outstretched.

6. Kriya Pranayama with short breath

[6.1] *Pranayama with short breath centered in Ajna*

Let us reconsider the technique of *Kriya Pranayama with short breath*. This wonderful technique is important for two reasons: it fosters listening to the internal sounds and *Om* sound and helps achieve the breathless state. Now, we are going to learn how this procedure can be practiced by making *Ajna Chakra* the pivot of the situation.

Focus your attention on *Ajna Chakra* in the center of your head. When it becomes natural to inhale, inhale quickly (about one second) from *Muladhara* to *Ajna Chakra*. Inhale only what is necessary. When it feels natural to exhale, exhale from *Ajna Chakra* to the second *Chakra*. Then inhale from the second *Chakra* to *Ajna Chakra*. Exhale to the third *Chakra*. Continue in this way ... (Third – Ajna – fourth; Fourth – Ajna – fifth; Fifth – Ajna – fourth; Fourth – Ajna – third; Third – Ajna – second; Second – Ajna – first. Continue repeating this cycle of 9 short breaths.

After a few cycles of this beautiful procedure, it will become natural to practice it experiencing a short pause in *Ajna* and in each *Chakra*. (Inhalation from *Muladhara* to *Ajna Chakra*, pause in *Ajna Chakra*; exhalation from *Ajna Chakra* to the second *Chakra*, pause in the second *Chakra* and so on.) During these pauses, you can mentally chant *Om* one, two or three times, visualizing that you are touching that *Chakra*. Strive to perceive the astral sounds in the internal part of the right ear.

To close the practice, increase your concentration in *Ajna*.

Perceive a virtual line connecting the temples. Move your head sideways slightly and slowly (of some millimeters) having a pleasant sensation of the *Omkar* vibration moving from one half of the brain to the other. Diminish the movement until it is no more perceptible. Perceive another virtual line from the *Kutastha* back to the occipital region. Perceive the *Omkar* vibration in the occipital region and guide it slowly towards *Kutastha*. Pause there. Do the reverse process. (To give you an idea of the speed of this internal movement let

us say that the movement from occipital region to *Kutastha*, short pause and back takes about 12-20 seconds).

Repeat different times. Again swing your head sideways and then back and forth, in this way it is possible to discern the two lines' intersecting point. This intersection is the best place to concentrate in order to have the full experience of *Omkar*'s internal movement and to perfect your focus on *Ajna*.

7. Mental Pranayama

You have already learned those variations of *mental Pranayama* who have a real value: they are the well known *Omkar Kriya* procedures. Something will be added soon (*Omkar Kriya* in the crown and in the sensible points inside the head.)

8. Yoni Mudra

[8.1] *Yoni Mudra raising each Chakra into fontanelle*

Cover the openings of your head as taught in *Yoni Mudra*. Inhale deeply with total awareness in fontanelle. Exhale from fontanelle to *Muladhara*; inhale raising ideally this *Chakra* to fontanelle with the purpose of merging it in the light and purify it. Hold the breath for about 10 sec. Exhale and lower the *Muladhara Chakra* into its seat.

Then place your awareness on the second *Chakra*; inhale raising it ideally up to fontanelle to merge it in light. Hold the breath longer. Do the same thing with all the other *Chakras* up to *Ajna*.

Place the heels of your palms over your eyes and calmly observe the darkness in the region between the eyebrows. It is not difficult to perceive a white light. Go ahead for 2-3 min. Then lower your hands and sit quietly for some minutes before coming up.

VARIATIONS OF THE HIGHER KRIYAS

List of the techniques we are going to discuss

1. Variation of the basic form of Thokar
2. Variation of the advanced form of Thokar
3. Adding Tadan Kriya to the complete form of Thokar
4. Omkar Kriya in the crown
5. Omkar Kriya in the sensible points inside the head
6. Alternative to the repetition of Te Va Su in Omkar Kriya

1. *Variation of the basic form of Thokar (see procedure II.1)*

(Five movements of the head substitute the rotation. There is no final stroke.)

This procedure can be useful to those who have problems with the traditional form of *Thokar* and prefer a more delicate approach.

Inhalation happens as in the basic form of *Thokar*. The chin moves up... *Om, Na, Mo...* Then the breath is held. The chin bends forward, toward the throat cavity: a certain internal pressure is felt on frontal part of the heart *Chakra*. The head resumes its normal position and then bends slightly toward the left shoulder, without turning the face. The same experience happens: a certain internal pressure is felt on the left part of the heart *Chakra*. The head resumes its normal position and tilts backwards: the same experience happens and pressure is felt on the back of the heart *Chakra*. The head resumes its normal position and bends slightly toward the right shoulder, without turning the face: the pressure is felt on the right part of the heart *Chakra*. The head resumes its normal position, then the chin bends forward, toward the throat cavity... pressure is felt on the frontal part of the heart *Chakra*. The head resumes its normal position. During these five bends, holding the breath, no *Mantra* is needed. Then the exhalation leads the awareness through the *Chakras* to *Muladhara*. *Te* is placed in the *Medulla oblongata*, *Va* in the fifth *Chakra*... and so on ... *Su... De... Va*, until *Ya* is mentally chanted in the *Muladhara*.

The time involved depends on the individual; usually it is approximately 20-25 seconds, but it can be longer. The procedure is repeated at least 12 times. It should be noted that the different pressures on the heart *Chakra* are more similar to a supply of energy flowing down in a tranquil way from a region above the head than the typical tapping of the *Thokar*.

It is obvious how this form can evolve. After inhalation, the whole set of the head movements can be repeated different times before exhaling – always holding your breath. The movements become more fluid: after bending forward, the head does not resume its normal position and, immediately afterward, it bends to the left, then backwards...

2. Variation of the advanced form of *Thokar* (see procedure II.2) (Different rotations followed by just one stroke)

In the previous Chapter we have seen that the practice of *Thokar* can happen with a lot of rotations of the head, repeating therefore various times the stroke on the heart, holding the breath during these rotations. We have seen how this technique is delicate, asking for the ability to hold the breath for a long time. We now introduce a variation of *Thokar* in which there are different rotations of the head, deprived of whatever stroke. During these rotations, great energy is stored in the head. Only after the last rotation, the final *Thokar* happens.

This procedure begins like the advanced form of *Thokar*. Take the awareness in the upper *Chakras* through a deep inhalation. There is the inhalation with *Om, Na, Mo, Bha, Ga, Ba* then the breath is held and the head is moved continuously counterclockwise in circular movement. The syllable *Te* is put in *Medulla oblongata* and *Va* in the cervical *Chakra*. You don't go down in the heart. The rotations of the head are deprived of any stroke.

The procedure goes ahead for many dozens of rotations: *Te, Va, Te, Va, Te, Va....* while the perception of these two centers grows in intensity. Great energy is accumulated in the head. Then only after many rotations the final *Thokar* is given: the head lowers on the breast and the syllable *Su* is made to intensely vibrate in the heart *Chakra*. This is a powerful blow on heart ("powerful" from the psychic and pranic point of view.)

A *kriyaban* remains in this position for some minutes having the perception of a great devotion and beatitude.

Remark

If the final stroke is given with great physical strength, the delicate structure of the cervical vertebrae, the muscles around them, the ligaments ... will receive a sure damage.

3. *Adding Tadan Kriya to the complete form of Thokar*

(see procedure II.3)

Practice a short sequence of *Tadan Kriya* immediately after the practice of the complete form of *Thokar*.

Tadan Kriya:

Inhale deeply, feeling that the breath fills from top down the lungs while the *Prana* (contrarily to what happens in *Kriya Pranayama*) goes down toward *Muladhara*. At the end of inhalation, your awareness is focused on *Muladhara*. Hold your breath. Lift the body just a few millimeters with the help of the hands and then let the buttocks touch the floor with a mild jolt. Exhale freely, perceiving an ecstatic feeling – this happens especially when the jolt is experienced not as a physical movement but as an intense mental stimulus upon *Muladhara*.

The action of lifting the body and then dropping it producing a mild jolt is called *Maha Veda Mudra*, "Position of the great perforation" – obviously it is the knot of the *Muladhara* to be pierced.

4. *Omkar Kriya in the crown*

(Expanding procedure of Omkar Kriya [IV.2])

In the previous Chapter we have seen how after having completed the practice of *Thokar*, the same procedure can be "internalized." We have called *Omkar Kriya* the perception of an internal movement in each *Chakra* – up and down. Such feeling is accompanied by the mental repetition of *Te, Va, Su*. We will now discover how the internal movement sensation can be induced in the crown.

The ellipse of the crown, seen from above, may be ideally divided into 12 parts.

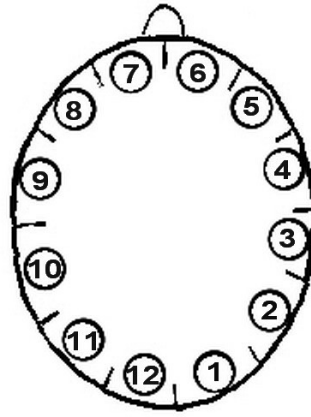


Figure 11. Crown seen from above

Thanks to a short inhalation, the *Muladhara Chakra* is ideally raised into the crown of the head, over the occipital region, on the right (into part "1" of figure 11). Now hold the breath and keep the *Prana* in that point. Repeat mentally *Te, Va, Su* three times in that region perceiving for three times the internal movement we have described in *Omkar Kriya*. Exhale calmly.

In the same way raise the second *Chakra* into the adjacent part "2" of the crown. Repeat there *Te, Va, Su...* three times and deepen the experience. Repeat the same procedure for the other *Chakras* (3, 4, 5, *Bindu, Medulla oblongata*, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1) activating thus all the parts of the crown. After two or three complete rounds a sudden bliss manifests and one is no longer able to mentally chant anything. The procedure ends in ecstatic absorption.

5. *Omkar Kriya in the sensible points inside the head* (Expanding procedure of *Omkar Kriya* [IV.2])

Let us again make use of this "internalized *Thokar*" process in order to stimulate important centers in the brain, helping thus the "pilgrimage" of our awareness towards *Sahasrara*.

Inhale raising the *Muladhara Chakra* into ***Medulla oblongata***. The breath is held in order to obtain a better focus of *Prana* in that spot. The internal movement sensation is perceived now inside *Medulla oblongata*. Oscillate slowly your head left – right – return to center, keeping the focus of concentration in *Medulla oblongata*. Think (mentally chant) *Te* when you move to the left, *Va* when you move to the right, *Su* when you return to the center. Repeat three times, always holding your breath. A calm exhalation follows.

Now raise the second *Chakra* into the posterior part of the **cerebellum**. Hold your breath. Repeat three times the afore described procedure with *Te, Va, Su*, focusing all your attention into the posterior part of the cerebellum. Exhale and come down to the third *Chakra* location.

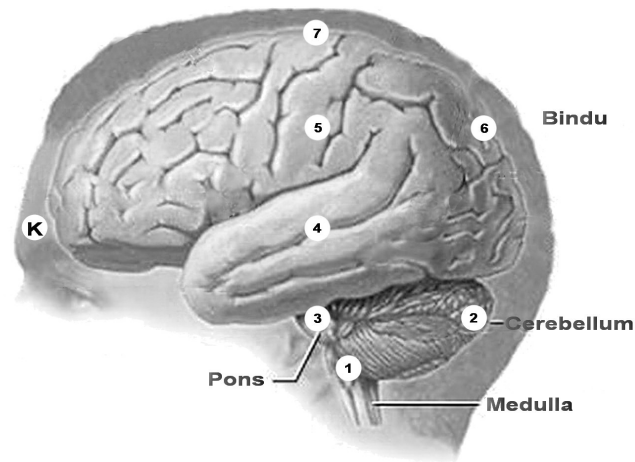


Figure 12. Locating some particular centers inside the head

Inhale raising the third *Chakra* to the **Pons Varolii** (to perceive it, come from the cerebellum toward the center of the head, over *Medulla oblongata* – a few centimeters forward). Hold your breath. Repeat the procedure with *Te, Va, Su* three times, focusing all your attention on the Pons Varolii. Exhale and come down in the fourth *Chakra*.

Inhale, raising the fourth *Chakra* over the pons Varolii in the point marked with "4" in Figure 12. To perceive it, slightly swing your head back and forth. Feel a horizontal line that comes from the point between the eyebrows backwards. At the same time feel the vertical line that comes down from the *fontanelle*. This center is the point of intersection of the two lines. When you have it, repeat three times at that point the procedure with *Te, Va, Su*. Exhale and come down in the fifth *Chakra*.

Inhale, raise it into the point marked with "5" in figure 12 . To perceive it, swing slightly your head back and forth. Feel a horizontal line that comes from *Bindu* forwards. At the same time feel the vertical line that comes down from the *fontanelle*. This center is the point of intersection of the two lines. Repeat three times in that point the procedure with *Te, Va, Su* . Exhale and come down in *Medulla oblongata*.

Inhale, raise it into ***Bindu***. Repeat three times in *Bindu* the procedure with *Te, Va, Su*. Exhale and come down to the point between the eyebrows. Inhale, ideally raise the region between the eyebrows into ***fontanelle***, which is the seventh *Chakra* trigger point. Repeat there the procedure with *Te, Va, Su* three times.

Exhale from *Fontanelle* to the point between your eyebrows. Inhale. Exhale from *Bindu* to *Medulla oblongata*. Inhale. Exhale from point "5" to cervical *Chakra*. Inhale. Exhale from point "4" to *Anahata Chakra*. Inhale. Exhale from *pons Varolii* to third *Chakra*. Inhale. Exhale from *Cerebellum* to second *Chakra*. Inhale. Exhale from *Medulla oblongata* to *Muladhara*.

Remark 1

Not only the points " 4 " and " 5 " but also the other centers of the head can be perceived better by the help of some light oscillatory movements. When you chant *Te, Va, Su* you can oscillate the head to the left, right and to return to the center with a small bump when you think *Su*. This is of great help.

Remark 2

The procedure creates a very strong effect. It can be described as the ability to see in a merciless way the ego's subtle tricks that drive human actions. The reason for many wrong decisions appears with a definitive clarity, free of all covering veils. The ego is a very complicated mental structure: it is not possible to destroy it, but it can be made transparent. There is a price to pay: there might appear (hours after the practice) inexplicable waves of fear, the sensation of not knowing where you are and where you are directed to. This is a natural reaction coming from some subtle layers of the brain one has touched.

6. *Making use of the Mantra Bha Ga Ba Te Va Su in Omkar Kriya*
(Instead of the Mantra *Te Va Su*)

The *Omkar Kriya* technique described in the previous Chapter (see [IV.2]) has a remarkable power of stimulating the *Chakras* leading you to the state of meditation. Some love the evocative meaning of the central part of the Mantra *Om Namoh Bhagabate Vasudevaya*. They read it as: *Bhagaba Tevasu* which means: "Bhagavan Tat Tvam Asi!" (You are that Bhagavan!) Let us see how to utilize this six-syllable *Mantra*.

Let us consider any *Chakra* (except *Ajna*) visualizing it as usual – a horizontal disk.

Bend slowly the head forward: feel a certain internal pressure on the frontal part of the *Chakra*. Mentally chant *Bha* in that place.

Raise your head and, without turning the face, bend it slightly toward the left shoulder. Feel an internal pressure on the left part of the *Chakra*. Mentally chant *Ga* in that place.

Raise your head and tilt it backwards. Feel an internal pressure on the back of the *Chakra*. Mentally chant *Ba* in that place.

Raise your head and, without turning the face, bend it slightly toward the right shoulder. Feel an internal pressure on the right part of the *Chakra*. Mentally chant *Te* in that place.

Raise your head and bend it slowly forward: feel an internal pressure on the frontal part of the *Chakra*. Mentally chant *Va* in that place.

Raise your head and bring your attention in the central part of the *Chakra*. Mentally vibrate *Su* there.

Moving this way from *Muladhara* up, when you reach the *Ajna Chakra*, the movement of the energy involves the whole median zone of the head. The

movements of the head remain identical (bending in the front – to the left – behind – to the right – in the front – coming up); the syllables of the *Mantra* are placed: *Bha* in the frontal part of the head (*Kutastha*); *Ga* in the left lobe of the brain; *Ba* in the occipital region (feeling *Bindu*); *Te* in the right lobe of the brain; *Va* in the frontal part of the head (*Kutastha*). Then when you raise your head, visualize the current reaching the center of the head and put *Su* in the seat of *Ajna Chakra*.

Going up and coming down, always repeating the same procedure (three repetitions of the *Mantra* each *Chakra*) constitutes one round: the required time is approximately 6 minutes. By mastering this procedure you will create a counterclockwise movement of energy inside each *Chakra* starting from the periphery and ending in its center. The effect is pure gold!

After a couple of rounds you merge deeply in the *Omkar* dimension; immobility settles and you won't be able to move your head anymore.

Appendix: how to handle the apparently negative effects emerging from the practice of the complete form of Thokar

In the previous Chapter we have introduced the "*Complete form of Thokar*" – a *Thokar* whose action is extended to the lower *Chakras*. We have emphasized how problematic may be its action upon our psyche. It is not surprise that some *kriyabans* reach the conclusion that this procedure generates effects which are essentially negative. This procedure must be completed by the procedures of *Navi Kriya*, *Maha Mudra*. They raise awareness and Prana along the spine.

What is suggested here goes in the same direction, increases tremendously the odds of success. It has been taken from *Kundalini Yoga*. We know that *Kundalini Yoga* is not *Kriya Yoga* but its the effects are heaven-sent.

[1] *Make use of Kapalabhati Pranayama in a targeted way*

Perform inhalation and exhalation rapidly; exhalation should be done by contracting the abdominal muscles forcibly and quickly, resulting in a backward push. Exhalation and inhalation alternate with equal lengths and occur about two times per second. The navel acts as a pump and it's almost like using the abdomen as bellows. Exhalation is active, inhalation passive. A sudden contraction of the abdominal muscles raises the diaphragm and a volume of air is expelled from the lungs. The sound slightly resembles blowing one's empty nose. As soon as the air is forced out, the abdominal muscles relax, this allows the same volume of air to rush in; inhalation comes automatically. During each expulsion, *Prana* is sent to the navel and *Om* is mentally chanted in the navel. After 15-20 of these short exhalations, there is a pause and the breath resumes its normal rhythm. Then another 15-20 of these short breaths are repeated for about 100 mental chants of *Om*.

[2] *Inverted breath*

(A particular Pranayama where the breath follows a "reversed" path – reversed in respect to what happens in Kriya Pranayama)

Inhale slowly and deeply. *Prana* present in the inhaled air is drawn down at the level of *Manipura*. As you finish your inhalation, swallow and push down gently with your diaphragm in order to firmly compress the energy brought down from above. Simultaneously, practice *Mula Bandha* raising energy into the third *Chakra*. Practice also *Uddiyana Bandha* and *Jalandhara Bandha*. Go ahead holding your breath and repeating *Om, Om, Om...* at least 12 times. During this *Kumbhaka* the air energy is completely locked in, compressed from above and below. Hold your breath for as long as it is comfortable. Feel energy and warmth brimming over into the surrounding abdominal region. Then relax the *Bandhas* and exhale gently feeling breath and *Prana* rolling upward through the spine.

Once your first exhalation is complete, again tighten the lower abdomen muscles, inhale a second time, swallow and push down with the diaphragm, thus again compressing the air energy at the area below the navel. Hold your breath and concentrate on this area, feeling the energy building there. Then, again, when it becomes uncomfortable to hold the breath any longer (go ahead repeating *Om, Om, Om...*), exhale, releasing the air up the spinal channel once again.

This practice blends together *Prana* and *Apana* drawing them into *Sushumna*. The key point is to hold the breath for longer periods.

In order to increase further the power of the procedure, we can fragment each exhalation in short bursts. The lips touch in the central part and the air comes out through the corners of your mouth. By using (with less force) the *Kapalabhati* principle, the sound of exhalation becomes: s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s ... (The different "s" are perfectly audible). There is a warm sensation in the lips: transfer it to the base of the spine. A warm sensation comes up (slowly but in a perceptible degree) through the spine. Repeat all the procedure many times and you will see how this warm sensation comes up with more strength to the heart *Chakra* and upwards.

[3] *Bhastrika Pranayama*

(To create a giant concentration of energy on the heart Chakra)

Bhastrika Pranayama is one of the most important *Pranayamas* of the classic *Yoga* (*Tantric Hatha Yoga* to be more precise.) It consists in forced rapid deep breathing, done with the diaphragm only. It is used here in a targeted way to increase the energy activated with the previous practice in the heart region. Breath through the nose, about one complete breath per second, being aware of what is happening in the spine. You can begin with six repetitions. By focusing behind the heart *Chakra*, feel the energy oscillating approximately 3 centimeters below and above it. It is like cleaning vigorously the area behind this *Chakra*.

You will feel warm in the region of the fourth *Chakra*. Then inhale deeply, hold your breath and feel the warm sensation increasing. Exhale intensifying that sensation. You can now repeat *Thokar* upon the heart *Chakra* followed by *Bhastrika Pranayama* in order to increase this warm sensation until you reach a paroxysm of joy.

(Consider also an incremental routine of this process– what this means is explained in Chapter 9.)

After all these practices enter a total immobility and enjoy a sweet *mental Pranayama*. Peace, internal joy, calmness of breath, listening of internal sounds, perceiving spiritual light... this is what you will experience. Your practice of *Kriya* will become a love story with Beauty itself. Be sure, be confident: after a certain period of time, a remarkable experience of *Kundalini* awakening will happen. It will overcome you when you rest in the supine position. Without experiencing any start of surprise, you will find yourself ferried from a sweet dream to an authentic heaven; you will return to daily life with tears in your eyes.